

STEPHEN KING SPECIAL

Rod Serling's

THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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STEPHEN KING

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Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

February 1986

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Unnatural forces.



Stephen King

In his introduction to the New American Library edition of the Bachman novels, **Stephen King** describes how his alter ego died of "death of the pseudonym" after an enterprising Washington bookstore clerk discovered King's real name on the copyright of one of the novels.

TZ is happy to present a less-publicized, and therefore healthier King *nom de plume*, John Swithen, who way back in 1972 published the hard-boiled tale "The Fifth Quarter" in *Cavalier* magazine. King already shows a sure touch here in territory most readers have never seen him mine. This swift, icy story can only be had in this issue of TZ. At least until some enterprising publisher comes out with the *Collected Works of John Swithen*.

If you want to know what goes on in King's imagination, take a look at **Douglas Winter's** interview. There's an unwritten story or two in this conversation, particularly in the remarks regarding airplanes and undisciplined rodents.

Winter will also advise on how to keep from getting ripped off in the rapidly burgeoning trade in objects King.

Finally, **Tyson Blue** brings us up to date on King's latest incarna-

tion, director of *Overdrive*, written by ... Stephen King.

Enough of this creative hurricane. (Would he have seemed strange at all in the nineteenth century, though, when George Sand, after completing one novel, simply turned over the page and began another, all while sitting in bed?)

Here are some other unsettling forces.

The great god Doolang.

Fish power.

Endless dark highways.

Glowing eggs.

Doppelgänger dogs.

Electromagnetic necromancing.

White-eyed video, video, video...

F. Paul Wilson's black humorish "The Last One Mo' Once Golden Oldies Revival," chronicles the career of a payola disc jockey, an R & B artist, and a god named Doolang with a taste for revenge. In our last issue, Wilson complained that it was almost impossible to invent new terrors for today's jaundiced audience; in "Golden Oldies" He skirts the problem neatly by sticking close to some ugly realities.



Patricia Stoll

He is the author of the novel, *The Keep*, among others.

Patricia Stoll has been an artist, secretary, copy editor, actress, teacher, farmhand, and art fair gypsy. "I don't usually write fantasy, but the idea for "The Age of Fish" (North American Review, June 1985) came to me in a dream, so it must be true," she explains. Stoll, a runner-up last year for *Nimrod's* Katherine Anne Porter Prize, is preparing a collection of stories entitled *Before and After* for her doctorate in creative writing at the University of Illinois.

Peter Heyrman, a long-time TZ contributor who can only be reached at a mysterious restaurant in Rehoboth, Maryland, created the steel trap of a story, "The Crossing," which has the simplicity of myth. If you've ever tried to walk across the Jersey Turnpike—or even had such a suicidal thought—"The Crossing" is required reading.

As you can see from Mr. Heyrman's picture, he does nothing but write for a living.

It takes a quirky imagination indeed to envision an apocalypse peopled (?) by giant, floating eggs. Or a title like "Ska ... Zik!" For all intents and purposes, **Jeffrey Whitmore** appears to lead a normal existence in paradisaical Monterey, California. Editor. Newspaper reporter. Hollywood screenwriter.

But, tellingly, Whitmore is the author of the teleplay *The Erotic Cabinet of Winthrop Mead*, recently optioned by EMI, involving the escapades of a midget detective, and perhaps more revealing a cartoonist capable of rendering a man being rejected by his live-in duck. Judge for yourself.

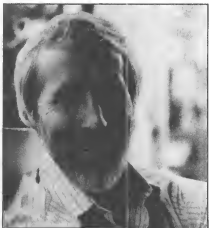
Richard Partlow, in "The Gift," presents a paradox familiar to many dog owners, particularly those blessed with the king-sized variety. On binges, these self-propelled fur balls are capable of mortally sinful feats of gluttony. Yet not until Partlow considered the supernatural ramifications of these phenomena has a realistic explanation for these orgies been offered.



Jeffrey Whitmore



Peter Heyrman



Richard Partlow

Perhaps there is also an autobiographical element in "The Gift." No stranger to scourges, Partlow is the father of triplets. He is an audio-visual specialist in Library Science in Los Angeles, and serves on the pre-screening board of the American Film Festival.

A.R. Morlan made her first professional sale to TZ after she earned runner-up status in the fourth annual TZ Short Story Contest. She has subsequently sold stories to *Night Cry*, *The Horror Show*, and other magazines. Ms. Morlan lives in Wisconsin with so many cats the numbers will no doubt change by our on-sale date.

Morlan has no trouble roaming through time in "Pillaging Poe." (She notes that she was born on Poe's birthday.) Whether autobiographical forces are operating here as well I leave to the reader.

(Speaking of writers who got their start in TZ, remember to look for our April issue, which will feature tales by this year's winners!)

Larry Tritten is the prolific creator of "Televisionaries," which presents a world of shimmering tele-screens, probing cameras, and cathode-ray sex. In other words, a world not unlike our own, except that *TV Guide* has applied for statehood.

Like Heyrman, Tritten is blessed in that all he does is push words around on paper all day long, except when he goes to the post office, which for a full-time short story writer takes the place of the office.

Larry lives out in San Francisco and has the spiciest telephone message west of the Rockies.

We'd like to salute all the readers who have entered our Fifth Annual Short Story Contest. The manuscripts have poured in from all over the country—we've rented a room for them in fact—and now that this issue has been put kicking and screaming to bed, we look forward to finding the best ones.

We've also rented a rubber room for editors in the throes of that common story-contest ailment, ms. delirium tremens.

Good luck to all of you! —MB

Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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THEODORE STURGEON 1918-1985

Dear Editor:

Shame on you, *Twilight Zone*, for not acknowledging in print the passing of Theodore Sturgeon. Not only was Ted a pioneer in fantasy and a guiding force for much of the current fanfare for the speculative fiction medium, he was a gentle, loving man whom I knew personally. And if you've forgotten, *Twilight Zone*, he was your book reviewer back in those virgin days of '82 when the publication was just beginning to feel its oats.

I have been a subscriber to TZ since Day 1—and probably always will be. Please regain a minor bit of lost respect and print a line or two in memory for one of Sci-Fi's most challenging minds—and warmest hearts. For a man who was slightly "more than human," it's not asking too much.

—Lonn Friend
Studio City, CA



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You're right, Lonn, and we aren't happy that we haven't had a chance to show our sadness at Theodore Sturgeon's passing. In our defense, we can only say that *Twilight Zone's* schedule is planned months and months in advance. We did run a Sturgeon appreciation in our sister magazine, *Night Cry*—as, no doubt, many of you have noticed.

We hope your letter will remind readers of Sturgeon's passing—and remind them to read his work again.

CORRECTION

Dear Editor:

Trivial pursuits: May I correct a couple of minor errors in October's "In the *Twilight Zone*," involving titles of my works? The title of my first novel (1962) is *The Case Against Satan*, not *The Cases* . . . plural. And *Sardonicus*, not *Mr. Sardonicus*, is the correct title of my Gothic novella. Columbia Pictures added the *Mr.* to the 1961 film version, to avoid confusion (they said) with a Columbia film of the previous year, *Spartacus*. The original *Sardonicus*, minus the *Mr.*, is currently available, with six more of the Gothic tales, in a new hardcover collection, *Haunted Castles* (MacLay).

—Ray Russell
Beverly Hills, CA

CLUB FOR A CULT CLASSIC

Dear Editor:

Many thanks for publishing Welch Everman's excellent piece on *The Prisoner*. The release on videotape of this cult classic is making new fans of the series.

Your readers may also be interested in Six of One: The Prisoner Appreciation Society. Formed in 1977, we are the only worldwide, ITC-recognized society involved in the study and celebration of this thought-provoking tv series. Our quarterly magazines are sent to members, and we hold an annual convention in Portmeirion, Wales, the actual "Village" used in the series. Patrick McGoochan is our Honorary President, and he has followed our progress through the years.

A Post Office box has been set up here in the States for anyone with questions about *The Prisoner* or

wanting information on Six of One. Anyone sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address below will get an immediate reply.

—Bruce Clark
Six of One, P.O. Box 172
Hatfield, PA 19440

WONDERS ABOUT WILSON

Dear Editors:

I like the new look of the magazine, and the new columns are OK, but why is Gahan Wilson in the back? He's my favorite reviewer, and I always turn to him first.

—Alan Washington
Long Island City, NY

We put Gahan in the back for an insidious reason. We want you, and the rest of our readers, to turn to the back sometimes, where we now feature TZ Video, the latest Video releases, notes on computers, and more.

SOMETHING ABOUT NOTHING

Dear Editors:

I am a long-time fan and subscriber to *Twilight Zone*. When I got your October issues featuring Anne Rice's *Vampire Lestat*, I was so excited I told my friends to pick it up on the newspaper stand. Result? As we say in this part of the country, "nada." Would you tell your distributors to get those copies out to the Bay Area? We're hungry for them.

—Bill Sanders
San Francisco, CA

We suggest you call your local dealers as much as possible—while we continue to bother our distributors. Sometimes dealers actually have the magazine hidden in arcane places, in between Boxing Digest and Needlecraft International, for instance. If you're still having trouble finding copies, you can call your local distributor. And for back issues, see our ad on page 85.

WILL THE REAL EPISODE PLEASE STAND UP?

Dear Editor:

I just can't understand what's going on in your recent issue! (Dec. 1985)

I mean, I know really strange

things are known to happen in connection with the *Twilight Zone* tv series (such as viewers claiming to have seen episodes which were never in existence); however, I saw the episode called *A Thing About Machines* only last week on channel 38 at 10:30 p.m.

I paid particular attention to the show, and that is why I was surprised to read the account of this episode in your magazine. Your account seems accurate up to scene 110. This is where your script has Finchley running into the garage, being followed and subsequently killed by the car.

In the tv show, he ran to the pool, and realizing he could go no further, he stood backing away from the car until he fell back into the water. There was a shot of the car with water rising up toward the headlights, then cut to scene 114.

Is it possible that there was more than one version of this epi-

sode on film, or is this another one of those strange things that happens only in the *Twilight Zone*?

—LaDonna Ketterman
Lawrenceville, IL

Yes, it is one of those things that happen only in the Twilight Zone. LaDonna, but in the studio, not in another dimension. Rod frequently revised shows while filming. We print his original scripts.

FRIDAYS FANTASTIC

Dear Editor:

Thank you for the recent issue saluting the new *Twilight Zone* tv series. It really whet my appetite (arising two days before the first show.) Unfortunately, Hurricane Gloria hit New England on Sept. 27, and my power went out.

The next week, however, the power was back, and I was treated to three superb episodes: "Word-

play" (a man in a world with a new language); "Dreams So Real" (a woman tries to escape into her dream fantasy), and "Chameleon" (an alien life form uses human forms to trick NASA scientists). What a superb show! I haven't seen anything this good on tv since *M.A.S.H.* ended. (By the way, the *M.A.S.H.* episode "Dreams," which had the 4077th's members taking very surrealistic catnaps, would fit in great with the new show—maybe they could re-broadcast it.) I look forward to more articles on the new *Zone* series. Friday night is now my favorite night of the week!

—Bob Nelson
Nahant, MA

We're having fun with these shows, too, Bob. See our new column, "The Tube Fantastic," which covers the four major anthology shows.

NEBULA AWARDS 20

Edited by George Zebrowski

SFWA's Choices for the Best in Science Fiction & Fantasy 1984,

including the winners for novella, novelette, and short story; a work by the author of the winning novel; selected nominees; essays and poems. \$17.95, cloth \$7.95, paper

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by PETER RONDINONE

COMPUTER PRESIDENT

Clifford Johnson says computers can now declare war. "And I'm not going to have any of that," Johnson, a computer services manager at Stanford University, insists.

To prove his point, Johnson has taken the U.S. government to court to get Ronald Reagan's Star Wars program declared unconstitutional.

An obscure ruling by President Roosevelt's attorney-general in 1936 has become the legal basis of Johnson's case. "It all happened,"

Johnson says, "because the governor of Puerto Rico took a vacation.

The governor was then a presidential appointment, and Roosevelt didn't want to get involved every time the guy went away. So Roosevelt sought to develop a rule

that automatically replaced the governor without the president being involved. But then the attorney-general said the president couldn't delegate a discretionary decision like that unless he made sure, when the decision was taken, he'd have some control over it. And that's the precedent" (38 Op. Att. Gen. 457).

Star Wars, he explains, is based on a strategy of "launch on warning," which necessitates the firing of nuclear missiles by a computer that also determines when we are under attack. Johnson believes this compromises Congress's constitutional war-making powers.

"And in effect," Johnson says, "that is delegating a presidential decision to a machine. It is also unconstitutional because it involves the

congressional power to declare war. In short, it gives the power to declare war to a computer—and not the president."

Consequently, Johnson filed his complaint against the U.S. government in a San Francisco court, and this February, after a year and an appeal, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger replied that the American courts would be dabbling in matters of foreign policy outside their jurisdiction if they ruled on the wisdom of President Reagan employing nuclear weapons that are controlled by computers.

"Sensitive national security and foreign policy matters," said Weinberger, "have consistently been held by the courts to be the province of the executive and legislative branches of government."

Still, Johnson says, "This is really a fraud. They know I got a point, and they pretend they don't understand. They say the president must exercise his own discretion and not the court. And that's what I'm saying! The president must be the one who decides and not a computer!"

So on July 10th Johnson took his case, with the backing of the Palo Alto Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, to a San Francisco appeals court. This time three judges listened carefully to the oral arguments. The result? Two of the three suggested that Johnson had a viable case, and they encouraged him to take the next step—to go to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The final decision by the court, however, has not been made.

BODY PARTS

Hearts. Livers. Lungs. Surgeons are busy every day taking them out of fresh corpses and inserting them into needy bodies. In India, there is even a lively black market in kidneys. Now, new research at the University of California at Irvine suggests that one day you may be able to graft Arnold Schwarzenegger's biceps onto your body—if Arnold wills them to you.

Kirby S. Black, assisted by Charles Hewitt, David Furnas, and Bruce Achauer, has successfully transplanted entire legs—skin, muscle, bone, blood vessels and nerves—from laboratory rats. And even though the rats were unable to sufficiently manipulate their new legs for walking, Black reports, the legs demonstrated simpler movements when stimuli were applied. "When a needle was scraped across the rat's foot," says Black, "the



rat would react by withdrawing his leg."

One obstacle to returning total coordination to the transplanted legs, Black explains, "is the six to ten thousand nerves, or wires, that run down to the different muscles in the legs and to the different locations in the skin. When you attempt to reattach them, there's no way to realign them perfectly."

"So," he adds, "when the nerves, or wires, grow back down themselves, some wrong connections are made and then you've got what used to make the foot go up and down doing something else completely different."

Once the legs were reattached to the rats, however, they remained viable for two years with the aid of an immunosuppressant drug, cyclosporine. Without the drug, the body's immune system (the antibodies that protect our bodies from invasion by foreign elements such as germs) would attack the tissue of the transplanted leg and reject it.



Unfortunately, giving the drug to leg transplant recipients presents new problems: "You make it necessary," Black says, "for that person to take this drug for the rest of his life; and if there are any long-term toxic side effects from the drug, they're going to have problems with that."

"So we're trying to do experiments to establish that you can not only lower but possibly get rid of the drugs in transplants altogether." In fact, Black reports, his studies have shown that low doses of the drug were already effective in the rat transplants. All of which, it seems, holds a promise of a better future for leg amputees.

Next: Head transplants.

HERP DINNER

Whit Gibbons, a herpetologist at the University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecological Laboratory, has eaten some pretty weird stuff, like fried mole salamander and iguana stew. And though some people might say "that's gross," Gibbons calls it a "Herp Dinner."

In fact, Gibbons recalls that his first Herp Dinner, given to some visiting colleagues in 1977, was a success. "The menu," he reports, "was fantastic. We had a four and a half foot cane-brake rattlesnake coiled around tomatoes and peppers as a centerpiece. Then we had snapping turtle salad, which tastes like chicken and is real good when spread on a cracker. But the mystery dish may have been the best, though it caused mixed reaction among the

guests."

Gibbons served what he believes was the largest array of water snake testes ever eaten in the United States.

"Naturalists have always eaten samples of animals they study," the omnivorous herpetologist notes, explaining that even the great naturalist, Audubon, probably ate more birds than he painted. "And I mean, he ate everything. And



he kept field notes on what the different birds tasted like, making editorial comments on what birds were too salty. He once gave moderate praise to young, roasted Carolina parrot."

"I'm sure Audubon didn't go out and shoot a scarlet ibis just to eat it," he adds, pointing out that scientists are usually strong environmentalists. Since many of the animals they eat are protected by the law, he says, "we only eat those animals found killed on the roads or those we sacrifice in the laboratory for important scientific experiments. We regard the meals as part of our educational process. It's a way to explore one more facet of an orga-

nism's biology—its taste!"

For example, Gibbons notes, when one colleague took a bite out of a blue-tailed skink (a South Carolina lizard whose tail is bright metallic blue) he ran out of the room and threw up. "Yet, this helped us arrive at a significant conclusion: to predators more experienced than ourselves, a bright tail may serve as a warning

that skinks taste bad." Moreover, Gibbons says, "We deduced that bright colors in many animals may also serve as a DO-NOT-EAT-ME sign."

If you'd like to test the theory, Gibbons suggests putting your tongue on the back of a red salamander from the eastern United States. "You'll find it tastes acidic. And, in fact, animals who've eaten these salamanders have been known to die."

Still, Gibbons admits, there are many good tasting animals to eat. And if you'd like to impress your guests with an exotic meal, you can find tempting recipes in *A Herpetologist's Cookbook: How to Cook Amphibians and Reptiles* by Ernest A. Liner. ■

by ROBERT EDELSTEIN

THE GREAT SLEIGH ROBERT

Once upon a time there was a man named Santa Claus. No, no, forget it. Introductions that simple harken back to a time long before the computer's coming-of-age. These days it would probably read: ENTER—

ONCE UPON A TIME, SELECTION SEQUENCE 1 or 2.

But BitCards Incorporated has taken a step to close still further the gap between computer mechanics and the joy of growing up. They've just introduced their new program, *A Christmas Adventure*, which should be a bestseller this holiday season. Designed as a text-and-graphics entertainment, the program is set in and around the North Pole ice castle of ol' Saint Nick.

In the game's scenario, Santa has mysteriously disappeared, and the player must explore the castle and its outbuildings to find him. Elves, tools, passwords, and reindeer may help or stand in your way as you try to save Christmas.

An extensive HELP utility aids the quest and an easy-to-use customization, a set of personal messages that can be applied to the program, is available, making the adventure the perfect Christmas gift for the junior hacker closest to your heart.

It's available for Apple II and compatibles (64K requires), and Commodore-64 versions for \$24.95. For orders call toll-free (800) 821-5226, extension 432. But hurry —Christmas depends on it.

BIG MOMMA IS WATCHING YOU

Maybe you've got your hands full and there's someone at the door. Or maybe you've got your hands full and the baby is scaling the walls of the crib. Or maybe you've just plain got your hands full. Whatever the situation, it's best not to be without the Sony WatchCam.™ This new compact security system makes home security and child supervision possible from any location in the house.

The WatchCam is simple, and easy to construct. It's built around an ultra-compact surveillance

camera, which weighs only six ounces and can be door-mounted on brackets. You can then program the unit's fish-eye lens to look through a standard door peep-hole. The camera is connected by a sixty-seven-foot cable, or optional extension cables, to a four-inch monitor.

Developed for the Sony Watchman personal tv, the monitor has a flat-display black-and-white picture tube which delivers a high-contrast image. With this unit in working order, you'll be able to see who's at the door from up to two hundred feet away. Then you'll

know whether to answer—or pretend no one's home.

And by mounting the WatchCam camera on the wall or above the crib, you can monitor your baby. The built-in microphone provides cues for feeding and changing times and the whole system will give you a constant view of the little one—provided the baby doesn't treat the WatchCam like a new toy.

The complete kit costs \$499.95 from Sony. You'll find it in your local video store or by calling Sony at (201) 930-6432.





HAVE HOUSE? CAN TRAVEL

Aerolift's Cyclo-Crane isn't the ordinary sort of household item; if nothing else, it's just too big to keep in the kitchen cupboard—or even the garage. But if you ever find yourself needing to move the household, lock, stock, and root cellar, the Cyclo-Crane will be exactly the sort of item you need. The blimp-like vehicle is just the thing for ultra-heavy verticle lifting.

Combining design features from both blimps and helicopters—like fixed and rotating wings and lighter-than-air construction—the Cyclo-Crane has more capacity and control than either. It can work in winds that no airship

could manage, and lift loads that would give even the mightiest helicopter a hernia.

It's commonly used for agricultural work and heavy construction, and to shuttle around prefabricated housing, but take our word for it: the Cyclo-Crane would have no trouble with your home-sweet-home. Piloted from a cabin suspended from its front, the crane carries loads with cables attached to either end. It is designed to carry half the weight of its loads with its four rotating airfoils (those propellerlike things on the tops of helicopters) and half the weight with the lift of its helium.

It's not the most beautiful of man's creations—the fact is that it's kind of pudgy-looking—but the Cyclo-Crane cannot only carry the heaviest of loads, it can also stay safely moored in an eighty-mile-an-hour wind. If the Cyclo-Crane is for you—and we know you're out there—you can get more information by calling (503) 842-8891.

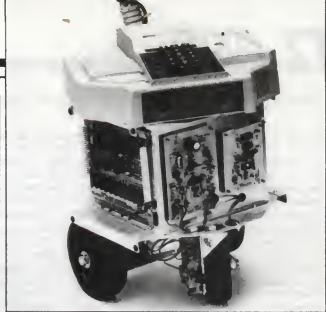
THE SHARP CALORIE CUTTER

Fitness and weight control have come a long way since *The Jack LaLanne Show*. Diet pills—real ones that do nasty things to your metabolism—are available over the counter and even on display in drug stores all over the country, and almost every star in Hollywood with a healthy body has packaged his workout method on an overpriced videotape. The fitness and weight control industry is, if you'll pardon the expression, weighty.

And now those fine electronic minds at Sharp

have decided to join the build-a-better-body stampede. Their entry in the fitness market: the MC-700 Calorie Counter. Stored in the unit's memory are the single-serving calorie counts for one hundred and fifty-three different foodstuffs, listed alphabetically from apple to wine. Meat dishes, dairy products, drinks, cereals, vegetables, fruits, and a host of other edibles—the MC-700 will give you the bad news on all your favorite dishes.

The MC-700 comes complete with a four-function calculator that



LAUGHS, THRILLS, ROMANCE

Tired of that old boring job, those ads begin. Looking for adventure, excitement, fun? Well, here's your chance to get that high-paying job you've always wanted—as you train for a career in the thrilling, fast-growing electronics field!

The people at the McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center take those words very seriously. That's because their program, in NRI Robot Building/Training, helps you learn by intricate, rewarding example. Other robot building/training pro-

grams teach you how to build a robot and nothing more. The NRI program teaches you how different facets of electronics relate to each other while you build a robot as a prime example of the interdependence of the circuits. The Heath Hero 1 Robot you build mimics all the actions and features of the industrial units.

The course starts with basic electronics and progresses with detailed instructions through the full assembly of the robot. Along with theory, the course gives the practical applications. You learn how to relate the operation of microprocessors, memories, and programmable controllers to industrial applications, and all about optoelectronics, industrial sensors, and voice synthesis.

But the course is not just for those who view the last paragraph as a foreign language they'd like to learn. In fact, the length and cost of the course depend on past electronics experience. So if you'd like a brush-up, or even a complete overhaul, contact the McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center in Washington, D.C., at (202) 244-1600. ■

has a three-key memory and an easy-to-read, nine-digit dot-matrix display. Still, it fits neatly into a wallet-sized case for true and absolutely obnoxious portability. You can take your calorie counter and calculator with you on the go. Consult its tiny display screen at restaurants and at the dinner tables of friends.

The MC-700 may well become a fixture at modern meals. But we sure hope not; we enjoy our indulgences.

For more information about this thirty-dollar supercalculator, call Sharp at (201) 265-5600.

Fantasy, myth, and slave-girls from Lesbos.

by DOC KENNEDY

Fantasy novels have been getting a bad press lately, here and elsewhere. It's with relief as well as pleasure, then, that I direct you to a couple of winners, one a highly original work, the other a skilled, if conventional, charmer.

The stranger, more ambitious work is **Mythago Wood** (Arbor House, \$14.95) by Robert Holdstock, an English writer. Rumors have been spreading about this novel for months, stirred by those who read the British edition of the award-winning short story on which the book is based. The advance notice is deserved.

It seems to me that all effective fantasy, as opposed to the pulp variety, and even most serious science fiction, probes the human psyche for its effects, exploiting deep-seated fears, dreams, and half-recognized shadows. In earlier times, this could be done subliminally—take *Alice* as an easy example—but there is no innocence in the age of analysis. Thus, in *Mythago Wood*, the theme has everything to do with Freud's Oedipal theory—the yearning for the mother, the rivalry with the father—and also with Jung's theory of primitive archetypes and their hold on the collective unconscious. The delight here is in how knowingly and intelligently these familiar concepts are pressed into the service of storytelling.

Chris and Steve Huxley are the neglected sons of an obsessed, unlovable eccentric, who spends nearly all his time "mapping" a patch of ancient woodland near their house. After George Huxley dies, Steve disappears into the wood, leaving Chris to fend for himself, to discover his father's diaries, and to begin to share his obsessions. For, in this uncanny wood, archetypal images (here called "mythagos") take actual shape; these include not only the "tigers" under the bed of any child, but the awe-evoking forms of beauty that are so effective in myths, and art. Leading all three men into the wood is the "wild girl," the lovely faun-like creature that has been a fixture of male fantasy forever. But to whom does she belong? Father, elder brother, or younger brother? Whose mythago is she, or does she

have a life of her own?

Eventually, Chris enters the wood on a quest to find the girl and the truth. Here he comes upon, one after another, half-seen images from his own mind. Meanwhile, he is hunted by his own now totally mad brother, and, even more frighteningly, by what he comes to realize is the mythago of his father, now turned into a raging, murderous male rival. How he copes with these terrifying incarnations and with his own fears makes for the best seriously-intended fantasy since John Crowley's *Little, Big*. This book is allegorical, but it is also an exciting, even heart-stopping adventure. A fine combination.



The second good fantasy novel is R. A. MacAvoy's **The Book of Kells** (Bantam, \$3.50). This one goes against all my prejudices—I'm bored with the Celts, don't like implausible time-trips into history, and am impatient with simplistic us-against-them conflicts. But this MacAvoy has a winsome way with a cliché. I confess that I adored her new book, chortling with immoderate glee at her sly jokes, rooting for her characters, admiring the verve of her last grand battle scene extravagantly.

The time and place are tenth-century Ireland, the adversaries the Norse "berserkers," and the sole perpetrator of magic, Saint Bridget (very effective in a blessedly minor role). Our hero is as wimpy, as downright nerdy specimen of twentieth-century hang-doggedness as you can imagine—and yet there's something about the little fellow. A fierce modern feminist is sent back in time with him—and, curiously,

she's not entirely out of synch with the tenth century either. The two take up with a maiden sworn to avenge her father's death, with a noble (well, not altogether noble) poet, negotiating an exotic culture made vivid by MacAvoy's considerable graphic talent. Lord, lord, if all the quest-mongers could write like this, the genre wouldn't be in such sorry shape. She shows every sign of being a prolific writer—this is her fourth book since the splash she made with *Tea With the Black Dragon* (although we don't know, of course, how long the Damiano series which followed had been sitting around). But I'm, mightily curious to see what she'll do next. Move into hardcover and

become a best seller, I should think. She's certainly got what it takes.

Other proven and prolific writers are not always so trustworthy.

Warrior Woman (DAW, \$2.95) brings us Marion Zimmer Bradley writing at the bottom of her form. The plot is borrowed from the comic books—slave-girl with amnesia escapes the brothel to become a gladiator—and fleshed out hardly at all. It's truncated with an absurd, tacked-on ending, as said slave-girl's brothers and sisters form an interplanetary martial-arts troupe come to take her away. No wonder she can fight! And, since all the troupe is "sworn never to share love" heterosexually, no wonder the sex is all lesbian.

Obviously, there's a market for this kind of adolescent fantasy; several writers of no great gift or taste have been turning out female sword and sex series since the mid-seventies. But why does Bradley

have to be among them? She's made the A-team with her hardcover writing for Knopf (*The Mists of Avalon*, and move to come). Her reliable B-shelf of complex, often effective Darkover tales never seems to go out of print (and that, for DAW, is really saying something). I think the answer is that part of her sneakily likes this sort of thing. Or not so sneakily, maybe, given her editorship of the uneven, but mainly pretty crude, *Sword and Sorceress* anthologies, also for DAW. Well, good luck to her, but I don't think she's doing her reputation much good with this mindless hack work. She's proved before that she can breathe life into the old hooah, and by this time she is surely enough of a professional to know what to do with all the waste-basket fodder that publishers will print for her just because she's a star.

Some short takes: I recommend **Top Fantasy**, edited by Josh Pachter (J.M. Dent, London, £9.50, but it seems to be available here in the U.S., too). It's a real mixed bag, which ends up, by accident or design, as an overview of many different kinds of fantasy, ranging from homages to Poe and Lovecraft (by Robert Bloch and Brian Lumley respectively) to thud and blunder by Karl Edward Wagner, then on to dragon kitsch by Anne McCaffrey, 1950s pieces by Horace L. Gold and others, and the avant-garde of J.G. Ballard and Tom Disch. The idea here was to ask twenty-four writers for their own favorite stories; the results are uneven but flavorful, and there are some first-rate stories, typical of their authors—Ray Bradbury, Tanith Lee, Robert Silverberg, Ramsey Campbell, and several others.

After recently making some harsh remarks about children's lit being passed off as adult fare, I want to add that real children's books, as all of us who love fantasy know, can be the very best reading of all. Keep your own eye out for a wonderful novel called **Amy's Eyes**, by Richard Kennedy (Harper & Row \$13.50). Amy is an orphan with a beloved sailor doll that turns into a real sailor. Off he goes to sea, to find the buried treasure marked on an old map—but something strange has

happened, for Amy herself, a real girl, has now turned into a doll. The crew of the frigate, on the other hand, consists of animals, all once toys, including the infamous Davy Duck. A strange and sinister woman has blackmailed her way aboard. Pirates are lurking nearby. Mama Dah-Dah is spying via an albatross. This is an exciting, sweet-natured story. As a grown-up, I fell for it, and I urge it on your lucky child friends.

A far darker fantasy, also set on the high seas, is **Not Wanted on the Voyage**, by Timothy Findlay (Delacorte, \$17.95). On the face of it, Findlay is simply retelling the Noah and the Flood legend from a radically different point of view. Mrs. Noah Noyes and her cat Mottyl are the twin heroines of the book, both at first fairly ridiculous figures who gain stature as the tale progresses. Findlay's storytelling is at times inspired—he renders the actual workings of the ark, and how the

cramped, patient, unhappy animals survive, beautifully—and his themes are serious. His Noah is a monument to despotic patriarchal stupidity, and the three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth are caricatures of various masculine shortcomings. All that is worthy on this ship of fools is female, including Lucifer, here transformed into Lucy, the geisha-girl. For, yes, Lucy is at least erratically good, unlike God, that vindictive, senile old fool who proves himself capable of wiping out an entire world full of innocent animals as well as not-so-evil-as-all-that human beings. I have reservations about some of this book—there is one horrifying rape and murder which I found unnecessarily violent—but I respect the author's intent, his talent, and the way that he uses humor and even sentimentality to further his ends. This is a Noah I believe in—I have seen his grim face on the evening news. Beware, Findlay is saying, of God's commandos. ■

The name on the cover was
"Richard Bachman."
But the imagination inside
could only belong to one man.

THE BACHMAN BOOKS

FOUR EARLY NOVELS BY

STEPHEN KING

with an introduction
by the author:
"Why I Was Bachman"

RAGE • THE LONG WALK
ROADWORK • THE RUNNING MAN

Stephen King fans rejoiced when the news broke that Richard Bachman—"author" of THINNER—was really Stephen King. THINNER, written by King under the Bachman pseudonym, shot to the top of all the bestseller lists and King fans scoured bookstores for early "Bachman" titles. Now there's further cause for celebration—THE BACHMAN BOOKS, an incredible collection of four full-length early novels by the supreme author of modern terror. Available in an omnibus edition for the first time.



Stephen King stands at the far side of the kitchen, grilling the largest hamburgers I have ever seen. I'm sitting at the dinette table, staring out into a snowstorm that descended two nights before on Bangor, Maine, and that now, nearly thirty-six hours later, shows no signs of relenting. Snow is drifting up onto the windows of King's house, and we've been drinking a lot of beer and watching videotapes and talking into a tape machine, and slowly, ever so slowly, going stir-crazy.

"So you're putting together a book of interviews with horror writers," he says, shoveling the Godzillas of ground beef onto paper plates and walking over to join me.

"I dunno, Doug. I couldn't imagine a more ordinary group of guys. You're going to have to go out of your way to make this one interesting."

He sits down next to me and digs in. I'm still debating how to wrestle my burger off of my plate when I hear his muffled voice call to me.

"Doug."

I look up, and he shows me a mouthful of food.

One of the questions that I've come to learn to live with over the past few years is "What is Stephen King really like?"

He is, in one sense, the horror writer who needs no introduction. In little more than ten years, some fifty million copies of his books have been sold worldwide and thirteen motion pictures have been based on his work.

But it is precisely the visibility and popularity of Stephen King the horror writer that make necessary a proper introduction—of the person, not the personality.

Here are the basic facts: Stephen Edwin King was born on September 21, 1947, in Portland, Maine. He was a midlife child, and something of a surprise—his older brother, David, had been adopted earlier when his mother was told by doctors that she could not bear a child. Today, he lives his quiet and staggeringly productive life in Maine. His wife, Tabitha, is herself an accomplished writer, as witness her novels *Small World* (1981), *Caretakers* (1983), and *The Trap* (1985). With their three children, the Kings move seasonally between a contemporary summer

TALKING TERROR

The baby was eating wallpaper in the crummy Bangor walk-up. Then Doubleday called.

by DOUGLAS E. WINTER



"The Man Who Would Not Shake Hands"

home on Kezar Lake in Center Lovell and a large Victorian house in Bangor.

Stephen King is of Scots-Irish ancestry; he stands six feet, four inches tall—hunching his shoulders slightly as if shy of showing his height—and weighs just over two hundred pounds. He is blue-eyed, fair-skinned, and has thick black hair; in winter, he usually grows a heavy beard. He has worn glasses since he was a young child, although he occasionally uses contact lenses. King plays tennis and softball in the summer, swims and takes long walks, and watches baseball in season, favoring the Boston Red Sox. He likes beer in quantity and loud rock-and-roll, does battle with a cigarette habit, and has been known to eat Excedrin dry when he has a headache. He tries to write every day except for his birthday, Christmas, and the Fourth of July. His stories exist "because it occurred to me to write them. I have a marketable obsession."

WINTER: It's now been some ten years since the publication of *Carrie*. You've gone from writing in a little trailer in Hermon, Maine, when a short-story sale literally meant heat for the next month, to becoming one of the best-selling writers of our time. You've not only gained notoriety, but also security. Is it harder to find fear?

KING: No, it's no harder to find fear than it used to be. In the ten years since *Carrie* was published, I have entered heart attack country—but nothing really changes inside, in the sense that I still feel vulnerable. Sometimes the objects of my fear change, and sometimes the quality of my fear changes—but I find too much fear, in a way.

I can't go to sleep in a hotel without thinking, "Who is in the room underneath me, dead drunk and smoking a cigarette and about to fall asleep so that the room catches fire? When was the last time that they changed the batteries in the smoke detector?"

I worry about airplanes. I can remember being on a transcontinental flight and getting to the halfway point—which the stewardesses always announce with great cheer, although what they are actually saying is that you are now too far to turn back. You either have to go ahead or die.

And I thought, what if somebody said, "I need a pillow," and the stewardess opened the overhead rack and all these rats came out into her face and she started to scream, and the rats were biting off her nose and everything else, and one of the people in first class opened up a pouch to get an airsick bag because this was so gross, and rats came out of there, rats came out of everywhere. And the name of this story was going to be "The Rats Are Loose on Flight 74." I just haven't gotten around to writing it yet, but I probably will.

I can still find fear. I can find more fear than I used to be able to find. Now, because I have some money, I can worry about whether bad guys are going to come and kid-

INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN KING

FEATURING
J. K. POTTER'S
SKELETON CREW
ILLUSTRATIONS

nap my kids and hold them for ransom. You're afraid of what it's doing to their lives. You're afraid of what it's doing in your own life. The last time I came home, the kids wanted to see my driver's license to make sure I was their father. Yes, it's still possible to be afraid.

I wish I could get away from horror for a while, and I do—or I think I do, and then suddenly I discover that I'm like the guy in the poem by Auden who runs and runs and finally ends up in a cheap, one-night hotel. He goes down a hallway and opens a door, and there he meets himself sitting under a naked light bulb, writing.

I guess it's just my fate.

WINTER: I asked Ramsey Campbell, who always seems to be smiling, why it was that horror writers were such a genial lot, and he replied,

"It's a facade." You've read his introduction to *The Face That Must Die*, where he talks of his childhood and its impact on his career as a horror writer. It's sometimes said that if you write horror fiction, you must have had a warped childhood. That's not your view, is it?

KING: I don't think that it is. People who smile and laugh a lot—this is a sign of people who are *mad*. In Boulder, where we lived for a while, we used to go to a little park that, in *The Stand*, is right across from Harold Lauder's house, where he and Nadine make a do-it-yourself demolition kit. I realized, when we were going there on the bus, that there was something not right about the people on the bus because they were all laughing. Some of them would pick their noses and laugh, some would pick their seats and laugh, and I realized after a while that these people were all retarded. And when we got off the bus, I said to my kids, "Did you make anything of those people?" And my daughter, who was six then, said, "They were happy people, weren't they, Daddy?" And I said, "Yes, they were happy people."

A lot of horror writers and fantasy writers I know do laugh and smile a lot. And it is a facade because most of us are halfway to being crazy—I would guess that, down underneath, a lot of us are really certifiable.

There is this wonderful moment in "The Cask of Amontillado" where a fellow is walling this guy up, and he's laughing. I always loved it. I used it in "The Crate," which became part of *Creepshow*. Hal Holbrook played the guy who finally entices his wife down the stairs, and she's asking him where this grad student is who is supposed to have gotten into trouble, and he says, laughing, "She's under the stairs." And she says, "Your best friend is in trouble and you're laughing. What's the matter with you?" And he says, "It is sort of funny, wait 'till you see." And it is, really. That's the final level. And so we laugh and smile a lot because I would say we are tottering, most of us, on the brink.

WINTER: Did you have that sort of classic writer's childhood, where you felt alienated and retreated into books, into reading and telling

KING

stories, rather than interacting a great deal with others?

KING: Only to a degree. Inside, I felt different and unhappy a lot of times. I felt violent a lot of times. But not a whole lot of that came out, because in the family I came from, there was a high premium on keeping yourself to yourself—on maintaining a pleasant exterior—saying "please" and "thank you" and using your handkerchief even if you're on the Titanic and it's going down, because that's the way you were supposed to behave.

But I hung out with the kids. I worked on cars, played sports as much as I could. I was a tuition kid, and it was a long way back and forth, so I wasn't involved in basketball and stuff like that. I had to play football, because I was big. If you didn't play football and you were big, it meant you were a fucking faggot, right? That's what it's like when you come from a small town.

So I kept that other part of myself to myself. I never wanted to let anybody get at it. I figured that they'd steal it, if they knew what I thought about this or that or the other thing. It wasn't the same as being embarrassed about it, so much as wanting to keep it and sort of work it out for myself.

WINTER: Many of your child characters—Carrie, Charlie McGee of *Firestarter*, Lard Ass Hogan of "The Body" in *Different Seasons*—are put upon by others, and forced to react in violent ways. You obviously identify a great deal with that sort of character.

KING: Yeah, I have felt that way a lot. I have always felt tremendous feelings of aggression that I had to cover up, because it just seemed not cool to be going around always flying off the handle. And writing was a clear channel for that. I think that is why there is so much destruction in my books, because it is a way of getting rid of a lot of that energy that I can't get rid of in my day-to-day life. At the end of *Firestarter*—where Charlie McGee, who has been put upon so much, tears everything up—there's an effort, I think, to find ways of saying that this is justified destruction, because I have never been interested in destruction for the sake

of destruction. But there's a great catharsis that turns it outward. It's me saying, "Never mind my childhood." I am doing this because there is a great catharsis in this for the reader. But that doesn't change the fact that it works for me personally.

I have always felt a real dichotomy between the way that I know that I am supposed to act and the way that I really feel a lot of the time. The way I feel a lot of the time is anarchic. It's shameful of me to even admit that, because you are not supposed to say that a lot of times you feel sort of crazy.

WINTER: You had a fairly fundamentalist religious upbringing,

My religious feelings have not changed much over the years. They're as traditional as the stuff I write.

which comes out in many of your books. How do you measure that upbringing against your current religious feelings?

KING: Well, my religious feelings have not changed much over the years; they are as traditional as the stuff I write. They are not complete. I believe in God. I think there is a God. I suspect that Jesus Christ may have been divine. I believe what I write when I say that we live in the center of a mystery. Believing that there is just life, and that's the end of it, seems to me as primitive as believing that the entire universe revolves around the earth.

On the level of conversation, the idea offends me that you can spend sixty-five, seventy-five, eighty-five years of your life as a pilgrim storing up not just data and conclusions but some kind of wisdom, some kind of moral ability, and then one day you

wake up dead, and that's the end—your brain is just so much useless clay, and they can carve you up and put you in the fields. I don't believe that. On the other hand, it's very tough for me to believe in anything about organized religion. I think Jerry Falwell is a monster, and I think Jimmy Swaggart is a monster.

Part of me will always be that Methodist kid who was told that you were not saved by work alone, and that hellfire was very long—the idea that the pigeon comes to polish his beak on the top of the iron mountain once every ten thousand years, and by the time that mountain is worn down, that's the first second of your stay in Hell. When you are six or seven years old, that kind of stuff bends your mind a little. So it keeps coming back in my fiction. And the major reason, I think, is that I still believe that most of the ideas expressed by Christianity—particularly the progression from the Old Testament ideas to the New Testament ideas—are morally valid. And they make interesting sounding boards for a lot of supernatural fiction.

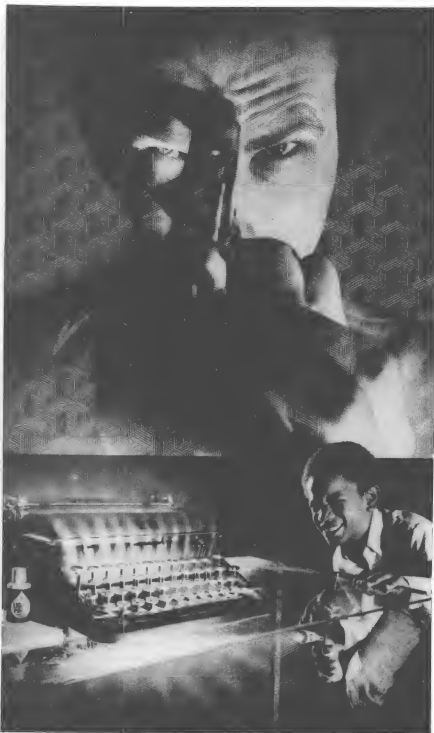
WINTER: When did you actually start writing?

KING: I can remember the first real horror story that I wrote. I was about seven years old, and I had internalized the idea from the movies that, when everything looked blackest, the scientists would come up with some off-the-wall solution that would take care of things. I wrote about this big dinosaur that was really ripping ass all over everything, and finally one guy said, "Wait, I have a theory—the old dinosaurs used to be allergic to leather." So they went out and they threw leather boots and leather shoes and leather vests at it, and it went away.

WINTER: What other kinds of stories did you write?

KING: I was imitating everything that I liked. I would have short stories where I started off sounding like Ray Bradbury and ended up sounding like Clark Ashton Smith—or even worse, they would start off as James M. Cain and end as H. P. Lovecraft. I was just silly putty. And still today, there will be critical reviews that say, "The kindest thing we can say about Steve King is that he doesn't have much of a style."

You know, I never have and I know that. Whatever it is, that stylistic thing, I can't isolate it in myself,



"The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet"

and I'm not sure I even want to, because I think that there's a lot of critical interest in writing that is pretty rather than in writing that is serviceable. I don't really want people to see my face in the book at all. If they want to look at the back and see my face on the book jacket, that's one thing, but I don't feel like I have to put my brand on a book.

WINTER: Who was your major influence—the writer who had the truly significant impact upon the development of your writing?

KING: The guy who taught me to do what I am doing is Richard Matheson. Because I knew, instinctively, that I was trying to find a way to get back home, to where I belonged. I had read Poe and I had read a lot of

Gothic novelists, and even with Lovecraft I felt as though I were in Europe somewhere. I loved the idea of the ghost story, and to a certain extent, I even loved the Gothic conventions that surround that kind of story. But I wanted to be at home, and I didn't know if it could be done. And then I read Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*, where this fellow is blockading himself in his house every night—and it wasn't a castle, it was a tract house in Los Angeles. He was going out and staking vampires every day, finding them at the cold counter at Stop and Shop, laid out like lamb chops or something. And I realized then that horror didn't have to happen in a haunted castle; it could happen in the suburbs, on your street, maybe right next door.

WINTER: You have worked right next door in most of your fiction—using Maine settings, even creating an entire fictional Maine landscape. Has life in Maine been an influence on your fiction?

KING: I don't really know, because I'm really too close to that thing. I am a part of that landscape, because I've lived in Maine almost all my life. I was born there and I've lived there full-time since 1958 or 1959, when we moved back after four years in Connecticut, which was the only urban experience we had until we moved to Bangor a few years ago. And Bangor is not exactly New York, with 35,000 people.

All I can say is that Maine is a rural existence; and in that sense, it is universal, but only to rural people. The majority of our population lives in cities, and some of the success that I've enjoyed may be a longing for rural scenes.

In a realistic sense—or in the sense that realism reflects myth in the story or idea in the story—I hate the country. I love Maine and I hate it. There's a bitter feel to the real country. When you think of Maine, you probably think of lobsters and the seacoast and Bar Harbor and sailboats and all that stuff. But the real country is poor people with no teeth. Junked-out cars in people's yards. Poverty. Food stamps. Hostility to the people who use food stamps. Indians who drink too much because it's expected of them. A kind of grotesque comedy of people who are so out of touch with the rest of the world that sometimes they live in their cars; they live in pup tents in the woods with great big color TVs

KING

inside them. I could go on and on, and none of it really means anything, except to say that I also love it. I loved that guy Joe Camber in *Cujo*, but I also hated him because he was an asshole. But he was *my* asshole—not in the physiological sense, you understand. What I mean is that I know the guy and I love him because he's like me.

WINTER: Before *Carrie* sold, you had written five novels—more than fifteen-hundred manuscript pages of work—that had not sold. What did it feel like when publishers not only bought *Carrie*, but paid an incredible sum for it?

KING: We were living in what really was a tenement in Bangor. It was a dreadful little hole, and we had a second-floor walkup. Our baby used to get up in the crib and eat the wall-paper. The couple upstairs fought every Friday night—it was very uplifting. So the phone rang one Sunday afternoon, and it was Bill Thompson from Doubleday, who said, "We've got a paperback deal," and I said, "That's great."

My wife and I had sat down and talked about this, and she wanted to know what the possibilities were. And I said, "Well, realistically, I think that it will sell to paperback, and I think we can look for a sum from \$5,000 to \$12,000, but that sums up to \$60,000 might be in the ballpark." And her eyes got big and round about \$60,000, but we would have to split it fifty-fifty with Doubleday—which is where Doubleday and I finally came apart. But even \$30,000 seemed unheard of. And my idea was that I could quit teaching for two years and actually get out from under the eight-ball and write two books, maybe even three if I wrote very, very fast.

So when the phone rang and he said we had a deal, I said, "How much is it?" And he said, "Well, I think you better sit down." And I said, "My God, is it that bad?" And he said, "No, it isn't bad, it's good. I think you better sit down."

I said again, "How much?" And he said, "Well, it's \$400,000." And I sat down on the floor. The strength went out of my legs, and I fell right down on my ass on the linoleum in the kitchen. I said, "You said



"The Jaunt"

\$40,000?" and he said, "Nope, \$400,000." I said, "This is 400,000 dollars?" And he said "Yeah."

My wife was not at home. When that conversation was over, I hung up, and I walked around the house, running my hands through my hair, stopping, then sitting down for a minute and looking blankly out of the window. Then I would get up and walk around the house, running my hands through my hair some more. The thought going through my mind was that I had to do something—I had to mark this.

After about twenty minutes, I finally decided that I was going to get Tabby a present. I was going to do

it right now, and as I crossed the street, a drunk would come along in a car and he would kill me, and things would be put back in perspective. So I went downtown and bought her a hair dryer for twenty-nine dollars—and I scuttled across those streets, looking both ways.

WINTER: Today, your writing has become a very public thing. You have become very public. People come to interview constantly, to ask you to appear on talk shows, at lectures, in print—anywhere and everywhere. You've even written an article about becoming a "brand name," and I know you're very conscious of

it. Has it changed the way you look at writing?

KING: Yeah, and I hate it. Being a 'brand name' has been a very distressing thing. And yet, at the same time, it isn't anything that I would change, because it has got me all this. I mean, this is a great place. My kid's out there with somebody to sort of watch out for him and all of that, so I don't crap on it. And it's always, in a way, what I wanted.

In college, I would go around with a John D. MacDonald book, or a collection of short stories by Robert Bloch, and some asshole would always say, "Why are you reading that?" And I'd say, "Hey, this man is a great writer." And in fact, MacDonald has written a novel called *The End of the Night* which I would argue is one of the great American novels of the twentieth century. It ranks with *Death of a Salesman*; it ranks with *An American Tragedy*.

But people would see the picture on the front, a Gold Medal paperback with some lady with her cakes falling out of her blouse, and they'd say, "It's garbage." So I'd say, "Have you read anything by this guy?" "No, all I gotta do is look at that book, and I know." Which was my first experience with critics—in this case, my teachers in college.

I always liked that kind of fiction, and that's what I always wanted to write. There ought to be a middle ground, where you can do it with some nobility, instead of either (a) being a schlockmeister, or (b) saying, "Hey, everybody's just saying that I'm only a popular writer. They don't understand how sensitive my soul is." There ought to be a place in the middle where you can say, "I'm trying to do the best I can with what I've got, and create things that are at least as honest as what any craftsman would make"—you know, what you would expect from physical work.

WINTER: How do you face the age-old problem of balancing commercial and artistic impulses—of writing for the market or writing for yourself?

KING: Well, I always wrote for myself. There is no trick to balancing that off. I always wrote for myself, and then I looked for a market that was somewhere in the ballpark of what I was doing.

I have got stuff piled up now so that I could continue to publish stuff that I think is commercial through 1988, so I don't give a fuck. I'll play

around.

Really, I am the only audience that I care about—and why not? I mean, I'm eating. Thousands aren't."

WINTER: For you, what are the dangers of writing?

KING: There are manifold dangers in being successful, but I think that the real danger—the only danger that I know of—in the writing itself, is that you tie up your self-image, your masculinity, whatever, in being able to do this. And you put it on the level of "This is how I define myself"—by this function, by making these things up. And then, if you lose it, you have nothing—there is nothing left. I would like to be able to have some kind of

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meaningful life aside from writing; and I know that if it happened today, that I couldn't do it anymore, I wouldn't be able to find that. I would be able to find all the support that I needed in my family, but whatever it is that comes from inside, where you have to find some justification in yourself to go on, I wouldn't have it, because writing has been my aim for so long now.

It was the way I defined myself, even as a kid. Maybe I couldn't put one past the centerfielder, and maybe all I was good for in football was left tackle. You know, I used to get cleat marks up my back.

But I could write, so that was how I defined myself. And it is still how I define myself; and that's the danger I see.

WINTER: In *Different Seasons*, in the story "Apt Pupil," the former Nazi death camp commandant who is hiding out in California notes that there

is apparently always an audience that is fascinated with the kinds of stories that he has to tell. Does that fact every concern you, given the kinds of stories that you have to tell?

KING: Yeah. One of the things about *Pet Sematary*—and I think it's a dirty, nasty book, and some of the fan mail reflects that—is that it's a little bit disturbing to me to find that the book not only went to number one, after *Christine* didn't, but the sales were actually double in hardcover than anything I had ever done before.

Twenty years ago, *Pet Sematary* would not have been a publishable novel, not because of the language, but because of its subject matter and theme. And the days of such equivocations are gone. So, yes, it disturbs me that that taste is there—in a sense, you can't gross people out, it's impossible to do it. But I can't let it affect me. I try to do what I do, and keep the morality of all situations in front of me, in the sense that I want to tell the truth about what people would do in these situations. Beyond that, somebody else has got to figure this stuff out.

WINTER: One of a writer's most difficult problems is self-censorship. When one is known as a horror writer—and particularly in your case, where you are marketed as the "King of Horror" or whatever hyperbole the copywriters choose—there must come a point at which ideas, even if they are at first blush nonhorrific, are transmuted, consciously or unconsciously, into horror. Do you find that happening to you?

KING: Yes. Your mind begins to go almost exclusively into that vein. I don't really see it as a problem, as long as the idea is good and it isn't just your mind fooling itself that an idea is good just because it happens to be horror.

There are a lot of people who are convinced that, as soon as I have made enough money, I will just leave this silly bullshit behind and go on to write *Brideshead Revisited* and spy novels and things like that. I don't know why people think that. This is all I've ever wanted to write; and if I go out and I write a novel about baseball or about a plumber who's having an affair with some other guy's wife—which I have written, by the way—that is just because it occurred to me at the time to write that story. And I don't think anybody would want me deliberately to reject an idea that really excited me.

KING

But you know, even the stories in *Different Seasons*, underneath, are really horror stories. They are like *Cujo* in the sense that we're getting a little close to the possible, and in this case it crosses over the line. The "Apt Pupil" story, the one about the Nazi war criminal, is just dreadful. My publishers called and protested. They were very disturbed by the piece. Extremely disturbed. It was too real. If the same story had been set in outer space, it would have been okay, because then you would have had that comforting layer of "Well, this is just make-believe, so we can dismiss it."

And I thought to myself, "Gee, I've done it again. I've written something that has really gotten under someone's skin." And I do like that. I like the feeling that I reached between somebody's legs like that.

I don't really care for psychoanalyzing myself. All I care about is when I find out what it is that scares me. That way, I can discover a theme, and then I can unify the story and magnify that effect and make the reader even more frightened than I am.

I think I can really scare people, to the point where they will say, "I'm really sorry I bought this." It's as if I'm the dentist, and I'm uncovering a nerve—not to fix it, but to drill on it. There has always been that impulse as part of my writing.

WINTER: There is an important political element in *'Salem's Lot*, but not until *The Stand*, at least in your novels, were sociopolitical concerns explicitly at the forefront. During the 1984 presidential campaign, you went stumping for Gary Hart. How do the sociopolitical concerns voiced in your books tie in with your campaigning?

KING: Well, for me, the really critical line is in *'Salem's Lot*, where Ben finally tells his girlfriend, Susan Norton, what he thinks is going on. And she begins to sputter and say, "Well, you can't really mean this, vampires and everything." And he says, "The whole fucking world is coming down around your ears, and you're sticking at a few vampires." And in most cases, that's how I feel about the stuff I write. Everything's falling down

everywhere. Everything is turning to shit in a political sense and I've tried to say that in some of the books.

The thing that I have come back to since *The Stand* is that all of those things are laying around waiting for somebody to pick them up—you know, the gadgetry. And I get haunted by the idea of gadgets, because that's all it is—gadgets. It's all stuff hooked together with rubber bands and Elmer's Glue; it's all insert Tab A into Tab B. And we love things like that . . .

So now we have nuclear bombs, we have stuff that can kill twenty million people in twelve seconds. CBW, nerve gas, the nukes, all of this stuff, it's just gadgets, that's all it is. Our technology has outraced our morality. And I don't think it's possible to stick the devil back in the box. I think that it will kill us all in

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the next twenty years.

Every day, when I wake up and turn on the news, I wait for someone to say that Paris was obliterated last night . . . by a gadget. It's only the grace of God that has kept it from happening so far.

But at the same time, I think that you have to try, so that if we do go on after we die, when we disincorporate, we can look around at the disincorporated spirits of our dead kids and say, "Hey, I tried. My hands are clean." You've got a kid who's twelve years old. What are you going to say to him after the big one goes up? Even if we don't go on, if you've got twelve minutes before the missiles land, you turn around and the kid says to you, "I understand the world is ending. Dad. What did you do to stop this from happening?" And you say, "Well, I played my Doors tapes." It doesn't work. "I gave to CARE. When the UNICEF volunteer came to my door, I gave

what I could." You can't say that, it's not sufficient.

And particularly, it's not sufficient for me, because I own my own nuclear missile silo somewhere in Kansas, I think, with my taxes and all. That's mine. That's my Titan missile. I paid for it with my tax dollar over the last ten years since *Carrie*. They are my cinderblocks; it's my liquid oxygen that's in the veins and in the fuel tank. It's my warhead, and I would like to do something about keeping it in that hole in ground.

WINTER: What do you see as the most essential element of a good horror story?

KING: Character. You have got to love the people. See, that's the real paradox. There has to be love involved, because the more you love—kids like Tad Trenton in *Cujo* or Danny Torrance in *The Shining*—then that allows horror to be possible. There is no horror without feeling. If you have that, then horror is possible, because horror is contrasting emotion to our understanding of all the things that are good and normal. Without a concept of normality, there is no horror.

So in that sense, I think that if you can bring on characters that people believe, that people accept as part of the normal spectrum, then you can write horror. It's the problem that a lot of the supermarket novels have. You don't believe the people, and therefore, you don't believe the horror and you're not scared.

WINTER: What really, deep down in your heart, scares you?

KING: Myself. I don't trust myself at all. I love my life, and I love my wife and kids, and I've remained sort of quasi-suicidal all the time. There's a real feeling of wanting to push things past the edge. You know, that it would be possible actually to continue to go out and do speeches and write books, and to continue to write at this breakneck pace until there is nothing left. And to go out and tour and do movies and continue to just take things on, not to be a good guy, but just so that I can say to myself, "Look at all the stuff that you're juggling at once—isn't this amazing?" And, at the same time, to drink a lot every night, possibly take on a drug habit, too—that might help.

I'm scared of myself, mostly. And I like myself pretty well, but I guess that's what scares me the most, because it's so perverse. ■

I parked the heap around the corner from Keenan's house, sat in the dark for a moment, then turned off the key and got out. When I slammed the door, I could hear rust flaking off the rocker panels and dropping into the street. It wasn't going to be like that much longer.

The gun lay solidly against my chest as I walked. It was a .45, Barney's .45. It would do the job. And it gave the whole thing a sense of rough justice.

Keenan's house was an architectural monstrosity spread over half an acre of land, all slanting angles and steep-sloped roofs behind an iron fence. The gate was unlocked, as I'd hoped. The Sarge would be showing up later.

I walked to the driveway, staying close to the shrubbery and listening for any strange sound over the cutting whine of the January wind. There wasn't any. It was Thursday night,

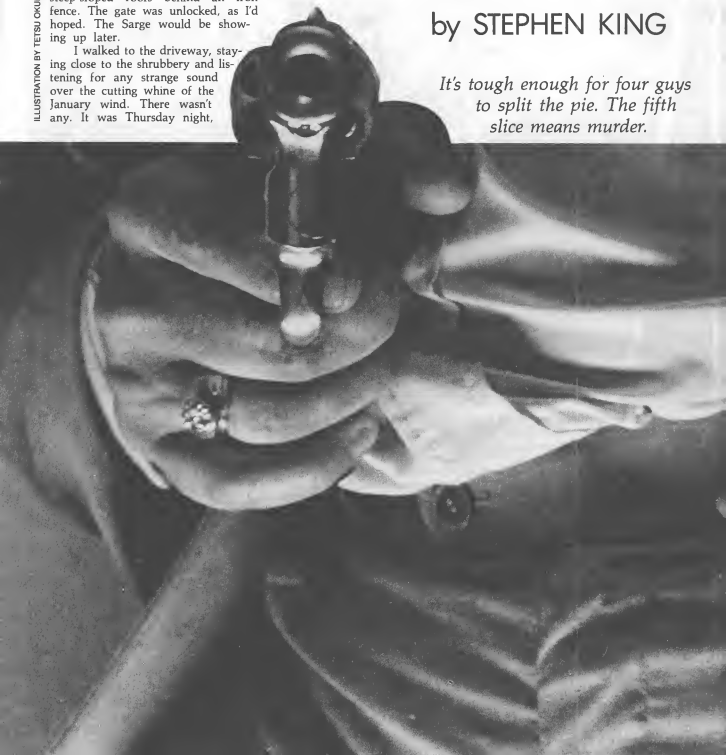
THE FIFTH QUARTER

A JOHN SWITHEN TALE

by STEPHEN KING

It's tough enough for four guys to split the pie. The fifth slice means murder.

ILLUSTRATION BY TETSU OKUHARA



and Keenan's sleep-in maid would be out having a jolly time at somebody's Tupperware party. Nobody home but that bastard Keenan. Waiting for Sarge. Waiting for me.

The carport was open and I slipped inside. The ebony shadow of Keenan's Impala loomed. I tried the back door. It was open. I got in, sat down, and waited.

Now there was the faint sound of music. Jazz, very quiet, very good. Miles Davis, maybe. Keenan listening to Miles Davis and holding a gin fizz in one delicate hand. Nice for him.

It was a long wait. The hands on my watch crawled their way from eight thirty to nine thirty to ten. Time for a lot of thinking. I thought about Barney. About how he looked in that small boat when I found him on that day late last summer, staring up at me and making meaningless cawing noises. He'd been adrift for two days and looked like a boiled lobster. There was black blood encrusted across his midsection where he'd been shot.

He'd steered toward the cottage as best he could, but still it had been mostly luck. Lucky he'd gotten there, lucky he could still talk for a little while. I'd had a fistful of sleeping pills ready if he couldn't talk. I didn't want him to suffer. Not unless he could tell me something.

And he did. He told me almost all of it.

When he was dead, I went back to the boat and got his .45. It was hidden aft in a small compartment, wrapped in a waterproof pouch. Then I towed his boat out into deep water and sank it. If I could have put an epitaph on the square of piney woods where I buried him, it would have been Barnum's: "There's one born every minute." Instead, I went out to dig up what I could on the men who had done him. It had taken six months to get a file on two of them, and here I was.

At ten twenty headlights splashed up the curving driveway and I hit the floor of the Impala. He drove into the

carport, snuggling up close to Keenan's car. A VW by the sound. The little engine died and I could hear Sarge grunting softly as he got out of the little car. The overhead went on, and the sound of the side door clicking open came to me.

Keenan's voice: "Sarge! You're late! Come on in and have a drink." "Scotch."

I'd unrolled the window before. Now I stuck Barney's .45 through it, holding the stock with both hands. "Stand still," I said.

The Sarge was halfway up the cement steps. Keenan was looking down at him. They were both perfect silhouettes in the light spilling through from inside. I doubted if they could see much of me in the dark, but they could see the gun. It was a big gun.

"Who the hell are you?" Keenan asked.

"Flip Wilson," I said. "Move and you're dead. I'll put a hole in you big enough to graft a tv set in."

"You sound like a kid," Sarge



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said. He didn't move, though.

"Just don't move. That's all you've got to worry about." I opened the Impala's back door and got out carefully. The Sarge was staring at me over his shoulder and I could see the glitter of his little eyes. One hand was spidering up the lapel of his 1943-model double-breasted suit.

"Get your hands up."

The Sarge put his hands up. Keenan's already were. Instinct.

"Come down to the foot of the steps. Both of you."

They came down, and out of the direct glare of the light I could see their faces. Keenan looked scared, but the Sarge was utterly composed. He was probably the one who had jobbed Barney.

"Face the wall," I said. "Both of you."

"If you're after money—"

I laughed. It was a sound like cold clinkers being scraped out of a furnace. "Yes, that's what I'm after. One hundred and eighty thousand dollars. Buried on a little island off Bar Harbor called Carmen's Folly."

Keenan jerked as if he had been shot, but Sarge's concrete face never twitched. He turned around and put his hands on the wall, leaning his weight on them. Keenan followed suit, reluctantly. I frisked him first and got a cute little .32 with a brass-inlay stock. I threw it over my shoulder and heard it bounce off one of the cars. Sarge was clean—and it was a relief to step away from him.

"We're going into the house. You first, Keenan, then Sarge, then me. Without incident, okay?"

We all walked up the steps and into the kitchen.

It was one of those germless tile and formica jobs that looks like it was spit whole out of some mass-production womb in Yokohama. A pony glass half full of brandy was sitting on the counter. I paraded them through into Keenan's living room. It had apparently been done by some pansy decorator who never got over his crush on Ernest Hemingway. There was a flagstone fireplace with a moosehead mounted over it, staring at the mahogany bar across the room with eternally sparkling eyes. There was a buffet with a gunrack over it. The stereo had turned itself off.

I waved the gun at the couch.

"One on each end."

They sat, Keenan on the right, Sarge on the left. The Sarge looked even bigger sitting down. There was an ugly, dented scar up in a crewcut that had grown too long. I put his weight at about two-seventy. I wondered why he owned a Volkswagen.

I grabbed an easy chair and dragged it over Keenan's quicksand-colored rug until it was running distance from them. I sat down and let the .45 rest on my thigh. Keenan stared at it like a bird stares at a snake. The Sarge, on the other hand, was staring at me like I was a bird. "Now what?" he asked flatly.

"Let's talk about maps and money," I said.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Sarge said. "All I know is that little boys shouldn't play with guns."

"How's Cappy MacFarland these days?" I asked casually.

It didn't get anything from the Sarge, but Keenan popped his cork.

"He knows. He knows, Sarge." The words shot out of him like bullets.

"Shut up!" Sarge cracked at him.

"Shut up your goddamn mouth!"

Keenan shut his eyes and moaned a little. This was the part of the deal no one had told him about. I smiled. "He's right, Sarge," I said. "I know. Almost all of it."

"Who are you, kid?"

"No one you know. A friend of Barney's."

"Don't know him," Sarge said indifferently.

"He wasn't dead, Sarge. Not quite dead."

Sarge turned a slow and murderous look on Keenan. Keenan shuddered and opened his mouth. "Shut up," Sarge said. "I ought to break your goddamn neck." Keenan's mouth shut with a snap. Sarge looked at me again. "What does *almost* all of it mean?"

"Everything but the fine details. About the armored car. The island. Cappy MacFarland. How you and Keenan and some bastard named Jagger killed Barney. And the map. I know about the map."

"It wasn't the way he told you," Sarge said. "He was going to cross us."

"He couldn't cross the street," I said. "He was just a patsy who could drive a car fast."

He shrugged; it was like watching a minor earthquake. "Okay. Be as dumb as you look."

"I knew Barney had something on as early as last March. I just didn't know what. And then one night he had a gun. This gun. How did you

connect with him, Sarge?"

"Someone who did time with him," Sarge said. "We needed a driver who knew eastern Maine and the Bar Harbor area. Keenan and I went to see him. He bought it."

"I did time with him in South Portland," I said. I smiled at Sarge. "I liked him. He was dumb, but he was a good kid. He needed a keeper and it looked like I was elected. I didn't mind. We were thinking about a bank in Lewiston. He couldn't wait. So now he's underground."

"Get me an onion," Sarge said.

I picked up the gun and showed him the muzzle, and for the first time he was the bird and it was the snake. "One more wisecrack and I'll put a bullet in your belly. Do you believe that?"

His tongue flickered in and out with startling quickness, lizardlike, and he nodded his head. Keenan was frozen. He looked like he wanted to retch but didn't quite dare.

"He told me it was big time, enough to last him ten years. That's all I could get. He took off on April third. Two days later four guys knock over the Portland-Bangor Brinks truck just outside of Carmel. All three guards dead. The newspapers said the robbers ran two roadblocks in a souped-up fifty-eight Ford. Barney had a fifty-eight Ford up on blocks, thinking about turning it into a stocker. I'm betting Keenan put up the front money for him to turn it into something a little better and a lot faster."

I looked at them. No comment.

Keenan's face was the color of cheese.

"On May sixth I get a card postmarked Bar Harbor, but that doesn't mean anything—there are dozens of little islands that channel their mail through there. A mailbox picks it up. The card says: 'Mom and family fine, store doing good. See you in July.' It was signed with Barney's middle name. I leased a cottage on the coast, because Barney knew that would be the deal. July comes and goes, no Barney."

I looked at them remotely. "He showed up in early August. Courtesy of your buddy Keenan, Sarge. He forgot about the automatic bilge pump in the boat. You thought the chop would sink it quick enough, right, Keenan? But you thought he was dead, too. I had a yellow blanket spread out on Frenchman's Point every day. Visible for miles. Easy to spot. Still, he was lucky. He couldn't talk for long. You'd crossed him once already, right, Sarge? You didn't tell him the money was new, all the serial numbers re-

corded. Not even one of the syndicate boys would dare buy it for ten, maybe fifteen years."

"That was for his own good," Sarge rumbled. "Ten years would make him thirty. Hell, I'll be sixty-one."

"Did he buy Cappy MacFarland, too? Or was that just another surprise?"

"We all had to buy Cappy," Sarge said. "He was a good man. A professional. He got cancer last year. Inoperable. And he owed me a favor."

"So the four of you went out to Cappy's island," I said. "Cappy buried the money and made a map."

"It was Jagger's idea," Sarge said. "We couldn't hole up together for ten years. No one wanted to trust anyone else with knowing where the swag was—too much chance somebody'd go for the whole pie. And if we just split, somebody—your buddy, for instance—would get weak and spend some of it. If the cops put the arm on him, the guy might just cough up names. So we all went down to the beach for the afternoon. Cappy took care of it."

"Tell me about the map."

"I thought we'd get to that," Sarge said with a wintry smile.

"Don't tell him!" Keenan cried out hoarsely. There was raw panic in his voice.

"Shut up," Sarge said brutally. "He knows it all, thanks to you. If he doesn't kill you, I will."

"Your name's in a letter," Keenan said wildly, "if anything happens to me!"

"Cappy drew it good," the Sarge said, as if Keenan were not there at all. "He had some draftsman training in Joliet Penitentiary. He cut the map into quarters. One for each of us. We were going to have a reunion on July 4, 1982. But there was trouble."

"Yes," I agreed. My voice sounded remote.

"If it makes you feel any better, it was Keenan's play. Solo. Had to be. Jagger and I took off in Cappy's boat. He was okay when we left."

"You're a goddamn liar!" Keenan squealed.

"Who's got two hunks of map in his wall safe?" Sarge inquired. He looked at me again. "It was still all right. Two quarters still wasn't enough. And maybe your buddy was better off out of the way. Three-way is better than four. Then Keenan called me. Gave me his address. Told me to come over and talk. Tonight. Of course, he had insurance. My name in an open-in-event-of-my-death letter that he'd sent his lawyer. His idea was that a two-

way split would be even better than three. With three-quarters of the map, Keenan thought we might be able to dope it out."

Keenan's face was like a moon drifting somewhere in a high stratosphere of terror.

"Where's the safe?" I asked him.

Keenan didn't say anything.

I had done some practicing with the .45. It was a good gun. I liked it. I held it in both hands and shot Keenan in the forearm, just below the elbow. The Sarge didn't even jump. Keenan fell off the couch and curled up in a ball, holding his arm and screaming.

"Where's the safe?" I asked him.

Keenan continued to scream.

Keenan's face was like a moon drifting somewhere in a high stratosphere of terror.

"I'll shoot you in the knee," I said. "The Sarge can carry you to the safe."

"The print," he gasped. "The Van Gogh. Don't shoot me anymore, huh?" He looked at me, grinning with pain and conciliation.

I motioned to Sarge with the gun. "Stand facing the wall."

The Sarge got up and looked at the wall, arms dangling limply.

"Now you," I said to Keenan. "Go open the safe."

"I'm bleeding to death," Keenan moaned.

I went over and stroked the butt of the .45 up the side of his cheek, laying back skin. "Now you're bleeding," I told him. "Go open the safe or you'll bleed more."

Keenan got up, holding his arm and blubbering. He took the print off its hooks with his good hand, revealing an office-grey wall safe. He threw a terrified glance at me and began to twiddle the dial. He made two false

starts and had to go back. The third time he got it open. There were some papers and two wads of bills inside. He reached in, fumbled around, and came up with two squares of paper, about three inches square.

I had meant to tie him up and leave him. He was harmless enough; he wouldn't dare to come out of his house for a week. But it was like Sarge had said. He did have two.

And one of them had blood on it.

I shot him again, this time not in the arm. He went down like an empty laundry bag.

Sarge didn't flinch. "I wasn't crapping you. Keenan jobbed your friend. They were both amateurs. Amateurs are stupid."

I didn't answer. I looked down at the squares and shoved them into my pocket. Neither one had an X-marks-the-spot on it.

"What now?" Sarge asked.

"We go to your place."

"What makes you think my piece is there?"

"I don't think you'd trust it any place else. But if it isn't, we'll go where it is."

"You've got all the answers, huh?"

"Let's go."

We went back to the garage. I sat in the back of the VW, on the side away from him. The size of the car made a surprise play on his part almost impossible. It would take him five minutes to get turned around. Two minutes later we were on the road.

It was starting to snow, big, sloppy flakes that clung to the windshield and turned to instant slush when they struck the pavement. It was slippery going, but there wasn't much traffic.

After a half hour on Route 10, he turned off onto a secondary road. Fifteen minutes later we were on a rutted dirt track with snow-freighted pines staring at us on either side. Two miles along we turned into a short, trash-littered driveway.

In the limited sweep of the VW's headlights I could make out a rickety backwoods shack with a patched roof and a twisted tv aerial. There was a snow-covered old Studebaker in a gully to the left. Out in back was an out-house and a pile of old tires. Welcome to the Park-Sheraton.

"Home, sweet home," Sarge said, and killed the engine.

"If this is a con, I'll kill you." He seemed to fill three-quarters of the tiny vehicle's front seat. "I know," he said.

"Get out."

Sarge led the way up to the front

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door. "Open it," I said. "Then stand still."

He opened the door and stood still. I stood still. We stood there for about three minutes, and nothing happened. The only moving thing was a fat grey squirrel that had ventured into the middle of the yard to curse us.

"Okay," I said. "Let's go in."

It was a rat warren. The one sixty-watt bulb cast a dingy glow over the whole room, leaving shadows like starved bats in the corners. Newspapers were scattered helter-skelter. Drying clothes were hung on a sagging rope. In one corner there was an ancient Videomaster tv. In the opposite corner was a rickety sink and a stark, rust-stained bathtub on claw feet. A hunting rifle stood beside it. A tremendously fat yellow tom was asleep on the kitchen table. The whole place smelled of wood-rot and sweat.

"It beats living raw," Sarge said.

I could have argued the point, but didn't. "Where's your quarter?"

"In the bedroom."

"Let's go get it."

"Not yet." He turned around slowly, his concrete face hard. "I want your word you ain't going to kill me when you get it."

"How you going to make me keep it?"

He smiled, a slow, sleepy smile like a fissure opening in a glacier. "No way at all. But I got you pegged."

"Do tell."

"The money isn't the only thing with you. If it was, I'd have tried for you before this. But you had to clean Barney's slate, too. Okay, it's clean. Keenan crossed him and Keenan's dead. If you want the bundle, too, okay. Maybe three quarters will be enough—and mine has got a great big X on it. But you don't get it unless you promise what I'm paying for—my life."

"How do I know you won't come after me?"

"I will, sonny," the Sarge said softly. "With a big gun. Because then it's going to be a new ball game."

I laughed. "All right. Throw in Jagger's address and you've got your promise. I'll keep it, too."

The Sarge shook his head slowly. "You don't want to play with Jagger, fella, Jagger will eat you up."

I put the .45 on full cock.

"All right. He's in Coleman, Mas-

sachusetts. A ski lodge. Can you find it?"

"I'll find it. Let's get your piece, Sarge."

The Sarge looked me over once more, closely. Then he nodded. We went into the bedroom.

A huge brass-railed bed, more newspapers, stacks of magazines—it was the living room in spades. The walls were papered with pin-ups. A huge record player, the kind with the horn, sat on the floor.

The Sarge didn't hesitate. He picked up the lamp on the night-table and pried the bass off it. His quarter of the map was neatly rolled up inside; he held it out wordlessly.

"Throw it," I invited.

The Sarge smiled and tossed the tube of paper to me. "There goes the



money," he said.

"I'm going to keep my promise," I said. "Consider yourself lucky. Out in the other room."

Something cold flickered in his eyes. "What are you going to do?"

"See that you stay in one place for a while. Move."

We went out into the littered, madhouse kitchen again, a nifty little parade of two. The Sarge stood underneath the naked lightbulb, back to me, his shoulders hunched, anticipating the gunbarrel that was going to groove his head very shortly. I was just lifting the gun to clout him when the light blinked out.

The shack was suddenly pitch black.

I threw myself over to the right;

Sarge was already gone. I could hear the thump and tumble of newspapers as he hit the floor in a flat dive. Then silence. Utter and complete.

I waited for my night vision, but when it came there was no help. The place was like a mausoleum in which a thousand dim shadows loomed. And the Sarge knew every one of them.

I knew about Sarge; material on him hadn't been hard to spade up. He had been a sergeant in World War II, and no one even bothered with his real name anymore; he was just the Sarge, big and murderous and tough. He had been a commando in the Big War.

Somewhere in the dark he was moving in on me. He must have known the place like the back of his hand, because there wasn't a sound, not a squeaking board, not a foot scrape. But I could feel him getting closer and closer, flanking from the left or the right or maybe pulling a tricky one and coming in straight ahead.

The stock of the gun was very sweaty in my hand, and I had to control the urge to fire it wildly, randomly. I was very aware that I had three quarters of the pie in my pocket. I didn't bother wondering why the lights had gone out. Not until the powerful flashlight stabbed in through the window, sweeping the floor in a wild, random pattern that just happened to catch the Sarge, frozen in a half-crouch seven feet to my left. His eyes glowed greenly in the bright cone of light, like cat's eyes.

He had a glinting razor blade in this right hand. I suddenly remembered the way his hand had been spidering up his coat lapel in Keenan's carport. He had gotten it out of his collar.

The Sarge said one word into the flash beam. "Jagger?"

I don't know who got him first. A heavy-sounding pistol fired once behind the flashlight beam, and I pulled the trigger of Barney's .45 twice, pure reflex. The Sarge was thrown twistingly back against the wall with force enough to knock him out of one of his boots.

The flashlight snapped off.

I fired one shot at the window, but hit only glass. I lay on my side in the darkness and realized that Jagger was out there. And, although there were twelve rounds of ammunition back in my car, there was only one left in my gun.

Don't fool with Jagger, fella, the Sarge had said, Jagger will eat you up.

(continued on page 96)

K I N G G O E S I N T O *OVERDRIVE*

First-time director King puts the pedal to the metal.

by TYSON BLUE



(Left) Grinning madly, the Green Goblin truck circles the diner.

(Below) Bill Robinson (Emilio Estevez), perplexed, wonders how a semi can move without a driver.

(Right) Trapped in the Dixie Boy Truck Stop, the patrons stare out at their rolling jailers. Hindershot (Pat Hingle), in the center, chews on a cigar.

Dusk. As I drive the coastal plains of North Carolina, I sense something ominous in the air. A huge truck, its lights glaring in my rearview mirror, roars behind me. Phil Collins on the radio feels it in the night, too:

*If you told me you were dyin'
I would not lend you a hand*

I pull into the Dixie Boy Truck Stop which, like so many others in this part of the Southeast, offers cheap fast food for people on the run. Only it doesn't look quite right.

The gravel lot is littered with semis, their trailers torn open, contents spilling out. A car, its windshield shattered, lies atop flat tires in a welter of garbage. And around the restaurant rolls a steady parade of hulking vehicles, even an ornate Peterbilt truck from Happy Toyz, Marvel Comics' Green Goblin emblazoned on its hood.

The Dixie Boy doesn't serve any grease-burgers, though. It's actually

the set of *Overdrive*, the latest in the long series of De Laurentiis films based on the novels and short stories of Stephen King.

Overdrive is different, though. For the first time, King himself is directing.

"I figure that as far as films go, I'm back where I was when *The Dead Zone* came out in hardcover," King says, explaining why he has decided to direct. "Ever since *The Shining*, the films have gone down at the box office. It's not that they were all bad pictures; they just didn't do that well. So I thought that maybe if I directed the picture, it might pick things up."

In recent years King has often quoted John Updike's dictum that the best scenario for a writer requires that Hollywood buy his novel and never make the picture. Yet King is taking on the film business himself now.

Isn't he putting himself in the worst possible position?



"In terms of reputation, I am," King agrees. "But in terms of trying to find out whether or not I can actually do it, I'm in the only position I can be in. I mean, sooner or later this was bound to come up because there have been so many movies made from the stuff and maybe three or four have been well reviewed."

King, an admirer of Elmore Leonard, speaks with dismay about the film adaptation of Leonard's *Stick*.

"I want to tell the story that's between the lines," King explains. "I keep going back to seeing the movie *Stick*, with Burt Reynolds. I have a lot of Elmore Leonard books on my shelf. He's like me in a way—he tells stories that are interesting. I shouldn't say that about myself, but I think I tell stories that people want to read, they want to turn the next page. Anyway, whatever there is that's Elmore Leonard is between the lines—that's where the tension is."

"I waited three months to see this movie," he goes on, "and this is the first time I've done that since *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. I was there for the first show, and I really wanted to see it because he did the screenplay, and I read the book and really liked it—and he wasn't there, you know?"

"There's some of me in a lot of the pictures," he admits. "There's some in *Children of the Corn*, and there's a lot in *Cujo*. But there's no Stephen King in *Firestarter*. I'm not in that movie at all, whatever it was in the book that people liked. So I thought maybe if they let me alone, and let me make the picture, it might work out."

Evidently, Alan Ladd of MGM and the De Laurentiis people have left him completely free to make his movie.

"They've let me make my picture," he says simply.

Based on the short story "Trucks," which appeared in the *Nightshift* anthology, *Overdrive* is a mechanical version of *The Birds*. In the story, a group of people are trapped in a truck stop by sentient eighteen-wheelers which run down anyone who tries to escape, forcing the survivors to fill their tanks.

For the film, King elaborated on this concept.

"The premise became 'What if everything mechanical went bullshit?'" King says. "In this version, not just trucks, but lawnmowers, electric knives, everything comes alive. Next

we needed a reason why. It wasn't very important, but we had the earth pass through a comet."

The film, which stars Emilio Estevez and Pat Hingle, is being shot on location outside of Wilmington, North Carolina, the home base of De Laurentiis's North Carolina Film Corporation. A full-scale truck stop, covering several acres, has been built from the ground up in painstaking detail, but the masterpiece is the restaurant itself.

So realistic is the set, which is built on the main artery between Wilmington and the Interstate highways inland, that drivers often pull in for fuel and food, overlooking the wrecked trucks, lights, reflectors, and movie-making paraphernalia.

Estevez, star of the cult film *Repo Man*, plays Bill Robinson, a parolee working at the Dixie Boy, which is owned by Hendershot (Hingle). Hingle, who appeared as the irascible police chief in Clint Eastwood's *Sudden Impact*, gives neophyte director King high marks on his performance.

"He's doing a fabulous job," Hingle enthused. "This is a complicated picture, as you can see. 'But he's doing very well. He's not a first-time director who comes in and thinks he's John Ford.'"

Hingle is no stranger to fantasy roles. He has already filmed *Santa '85*, an episode of Steven Spielberg's *Amazing Stories*.

King freely admits that the intricacies of directing are new to him.

"What surprised me most about this was how little I knew," he says. "I knew how a film shouldn't look. I thought I'd just ease into this like cold water, a little at a time. This is earn while you learn," he chuckles.

Flexible with his performers, he is open to improvisation by the actors. "I felt that in film, I should be open to it, and when it comes I shouldn't feel the need to reject it."

One device King has rejected is the storyboard. Although some were made early on in the picture, they have not been used. They are too similar to plot outlines, which King has never used. Sometimes, however, he toys with a large tabletop model of the set to visualize sequences.

Asked about his influences, King names only one: Hitchcock.

Hitchcock, King says, was concerned with creating suspense rather than shock in his films. He cites the famous Hitchcock example of the

men with the bomb under the table. If we know there's a bomb there and the men don't, and the scene lasts for ten minutes, we have ten minutes of tension.

"We do something like that early on in the film," King says. "We have a guy outside pumping gas, and all of a sudden the pumps stop. He cuts



off the automatic device and looks at it, then digs around with his finger, trying to get dirt out of the line. Then he looks into the nozzle. We all know what's going to happen—he's going to get sprayed with gasoline—but we don't know when. I had him put the nozzle back down, then did it. It's all a matter of timing, and that creates suspense."

Despite his so-far happy directing experience, King doesn't plan to give up his word processor on a permanent basis.

"Oh God, no," he groans. "I can imagine doing it again sometime, but not very soon. I've got a family to take care of!"

For now, King is concentrating on impressing his vision of a mechanical world gone mad on America's film audience. He is confident that he can do so.

"Dino came by the set one day, and he was convinced we were making some kind of existential comedy film here," he recalls. "But I think that when everything is all done, we will have laughed our way to making a very scary film."

If it succeeds, *Overdrive* will make your skin crawl every time a truck creeps up behind you on the road.



COLLECTING KING

For feverish collectors—a cautionary tale.

by DOUGLAS E. WINTER

Last summer, while browsing in a ramshackle West Village bookstore said to specialize in fantasy and science fiction, I asked the type of question I've been putting more and more often to rare book dealers:

"Do you have a first edition of *The Shining*?"

The dealer's lips parted in a vulpine smile. He nodded once, then disappeared into a back room. Moments later, I was holding a mint copy of Stephen King's third novel. I flipped open its untouched pages and glanced at the copyright for confirmation of its edition. When I examined the page bottoms, however, I saw the tell-tale speckling of a Doubleday "remainder"—an unsold book dumped to the likes of Publishers Clearing House for resale at a substantially discounted price. I knew, beyond doubt, that at least one carton of identical copies was stored in the back room.

I asked, "How much?"

"Two hundred dollars," he replied with a curt inflection: take it or leave it.

I tossed the book back at him; his reflexes were sound, even though his business practices were not. "You bought that book for \$1.98," I said. "How dare you?"

His smile only deepened. "You know that," he said. "And I know that." He paused and gestured vaguely toward the street. "But they don't know that."

Those nameless prey are the growing horde of Stephen King book collectors. Their fanatical book-

buying habits, fueled by profiteering dealers and a fair amount of misinformation, have sent the prices of King volumes soaring in the rare book market—a phenomenon of sufficient interest to gain the attention of the *Wall Street Journal*, which advised its readers earlier this year that "When Buying Rare Books Remember: Go for Stephen King, Not Galsworthy."

I read the *Journal* article, just as I confronted that New York bookseller, with a sense of anxious dread. Having spent several years writing about Stephen King and his fiction, I have witnessed the dark side of his success—the over-eager fans, the genuine crazies, the never-private life, and the omnipresent spectre of commercial exploitation. I know now that his talents alone cannot explain why the books of a young, active writer, published only in the last decade, command such extravagant prices while paperback editions are readily available in airports, grocery stores, pharmacies.

The real answer, I fear, is not a pretty one.

"Why?" asks one of the characters in George A. Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, watching aghast as cannibalistic zombies march relentlessly through the corridors of a suburban shopping mall. His companion deadpans a chilling reply: "This was an important place in their lives."

As Stephen King has grown from cult horror writer to one of the publishing industry's leading "brand names," his audience has come to resemble those stalking zombies, consuming his work with indiscrimi-

nate zeal. More than fifty million copies of King's books have seen print worldwide, and nearly twenty film projects have been spawned from his writing, while his readers, seemingly insatiable, clamor for more ... and more. Beginning in September, 1986, four new King novels will be published in a fourteen-month period, a publishing landmark equivalent to the Beatles holding the top five singles on the *Billboard* charts in January, 1965. One of these novels, *Misery*, is a searing commentary on the price of a writer's fame.

The phenomenon of King collecting is rooted in the small hardcover print runs of his early novels—which, although respectable, pale before such numbers as the estimated 600,000 first editions of *The Talisman*—and the fact that his early sales success began with the 1976 paperbacks of *Salem's Lot* and the movie tie-in edition of *Carrie*. As his first fans, most of them regular readers of fantasy and horror and thus well-acquainted with collecting, sought more permanent editions of these books, the hunt was on.

In theory, the most collectible trade edition (i.e., book published for the mass market) should be the 1974 Doubleday hardcover of *Carrie*. Not only was it King's first book, appearing in the smallest printing (allegedly some 18,000 copies), but its publisher produces notoriously flimsy books and sells substantial quantities to libraries, thus minimizing the number of copies that likely survive today. Market prices now range in excess of \$400—not too shabby for

a book whose cover price was \$4.95.

The real trade rarity, however, is the first edition hardcover of King's second published novel, *Salem's Lot* (1975). Although its initial print run by Doubleday is said to have exceeded 30,000 copies, the original dustjacket, used with an unknown number of these copies, includes an erroneous reference to "Father Cody," error equaling money in this case. Current market prices for such copies range as high as \$500.

Trade editions of later books bring much lower prices, primarily because print runs grew successively larger, while bookdealers, clued to the mounting interest in King, began to stockpile new releases. *Night Shift* (1978), for example, is regularly offered at \$150 to \$200, and *Danse Macabre* at \$80 to \$100, while first editions of more recent books, like *Christine* and *Pet Sematary* (both 1983), are available for \$20 to \$30.

Immediately after King first topped the hardcover bestseller charts with *The Dead Zone*, the collectible market reacted to the "problem" of large printings. Specialty publishers began obtaining authority to produce "deluxe editions," limited to a thousand or so copies, for sale to collectors (and, of course, to sellers of col-

lectible books). Beginning with *Firestarter*, almost every King book has been produced in a deluxe format, signed by the author and slip-cased, with illustrations, special binding, or some other distinguishing characteristic. Sold initially by mail order, these editions—the best of which are Donald M. Grant's *Christine* and *The Talisman*, and *Skeleton Crew* from *Scream/Press*—have generally doubled in price within a year of their release.

Until the early 1980s, King collecting was a relatively benign phenomenon, with only the earliest books and occasional deluxe editions in significant demand. Then came *The Dark Tower: The Gunslinger*, published in 1982 by Donald M. Grant; it was a different kind of deluxe edition—an original book without a mass market equivalent—presenting five short stories from *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* that King believed would not appeal to his general readership. He was wrong.

Published in a slip-cased version plus a "trade" edition restricted to 10,000 copies, its listing the following year in the front matter of *Pet Sematary* produced a tidal wave of phone calls and letters seeking this

"mystery" book. A second edition of 10,000 copies was insufficient to fulfill demand, and nearly every other letter that I receive from a King fan asks how to obtain a copy. Originally priced at \$20, copies of the first trade edition now sell for \$200. My advice? Pick up the back issues of *Fantasy and Science Fiction* instead of the book. They lack its beautiful Michael Whelan illustrations, but can be found for fifty cents to two dollars a copy.

The search for *The Dark Tower* brought countless King fans—as well as non-genre book dealers—into the rare book market; prices surged dramatically on all King books, and the perspective began to shift from collecting to investing. The result was virtual hysteria in early 1985 following the public disclosure that Stephen King was "Richard Bachman." The first four Bachman books had been published by New American Library only in Signet paperbacks, and, with the exception of *The Running Man*, were out of print. Fans, desperate to read—or at least own—the Bachmans, flooded the market. The Signet original of the first Bachman, *Rage*, became, over-

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ILLUSTRATION BY ROSIE MACKIEWICZ

THE LAST ONE MO ONCE GOLDEN OLDIES REVIVAL

Daddy Shoog has the connections. Flip Goodloe has the licks. One worships moolah. The other digs Doolang.



by F. PAUL WILSON

The announcer broke in with the news—right into the middle of a song by the latest new-wave sensation, Polio.

Philip "Flip" Goodloe was gone. The father and seminal stylist of the rock 'n' roll guitar was dead at age forty-eight.

Lenny Winter leaned back and took a long draw on the Royal Jamaican delicately balanced between his pudgy thumb and forefinger. He certainly didn't mind anybody cutting Polio's music short—this new-wave crap was worse than the stuff he had jockeyed twenty-five years ago. And he wasn't all that surprised about Flip.

Dead ... the Flipper was dead. Lenny had sensed that coming last week. The only disconcerting thing was that it had happened so soon after he had seen him. Fifteen or twenty years without laying eyes on Flip Goodloe, then Lenny visits him, then he's dead, all within a few days' time. Definitely disconcerting.

He listened for details about the death, but there were none. Only a hushed voice repeating that the major influence on every rocker who had ever picked up an electric six-string was dead. Even guitarists who had never actually heard a Flip Goodloe record owed him a debt, because, as the voice said, if you weren't directly influenced by Goodloe, you were influenced by somebody who got his licks from somebody else who got his licks from Flip Goodloe. "All roads eventually lead to Goodloe," the voice said. It closed the break-in with: "The exact cause of death is unknown at this time."

"I can tell you the exact cause of death," Lenny muttered to the empty room. "Smack. Flip Goodloe the hop-head finally overjuiced himself."

The disc jockey—whoops, sorry, they liked to be called "radio personalities" now—yanked the Polio record and put on "Mary-Liz" from 1955, Flip's first hit record. An instant Flip Goodloe retrospective was under way.

In spite of his personal knowledge of what a jerk Flip was, Lenny Winter suffered a pang of nostalgia as the frenetic guitar notes and wailing voice poured out of the twin Bose 901s in the corners of the room. Nobody could play like the Flipper in his day. Flip didn't showboat and he didn't just doodle around the melody—he got

THE LAST ONE MO ONCE GOLDEN OLDIES REVIVAL

behind his bands and pushed, driving them till they were cooking at white heat.

Lenny Winter put his cigar down and pulled his considerable bulk out of the recliner. He was pushing fifty-five and was at least that many pounds overweight. He waddled over to the north wall of his trophy room—one of the smaller of the eighteen rooms in his house. Where was it, now? He scanned along rows of gold records. There—the 45 with the Backgammon label. "Mary-Liz" by Flip Goodloe. A million sales, RIAA certified. And beneath the title, the composer credit: (P. Goodloe-L. Weinstein). Lenny smiled. Not too many people knew that Lenny Winter's birth certificate read "Leonard Weinstein."

He wondered how many copies would sell in the inevitable surge of interest after Flip's death. Look how many Lennon records moved after he bought it. Lenny did not like to think of himself as one who made money off the dead, but a buck was a buck, and half of all royalties from sales and airplay of a good number of Flip's early songs belonged to Lenny and it was only fair that he got what was rightfully his. He made a mental note to call BMI in the morning.

The radio segued into Goodloe's second big hit, "Little Rocker," another P. Goodloe-L. Weinstein composition. A gold copy of that, too, was somewhere on the wall.

Those were the days when Lenny could do no wrong. Flip had it all then, too. But he blew it. Lenny had managed to stay at or near the top. Flip had been nowhere for years.

Which was why Lenny had visited him last week—to give the Flipper another chance.

He shook his head. What a mistake that had been!

It hadn't been easy to find Flip. He had moved back to Alexandria, Virginia, his old hometown. He still played an occasional solo gig in some of the M Street clubs in D.C., but sporadically. He was unreliable. Club owners had learned to expect him when they saw him. Everyone knew he was shooting shit again. No one had a phone number, but a bartender knew a girl who had gone home with him after a recent gig. Lenny found her. As expected, she was young and white.

She remembered the address.

It was in a garden-apartment complex that gave new meaning to the word "run-down." Waist-high weeds sprouted through cracks in the parking-lot blacktop, where a couple of stripped and rotting wrecks slumped amid the more functioning cars; children's toys lay scattered over the dirt patch that had once been a lawn; on the buildings themselves the green of the previous coat of paint showed through cracks and chips in the current white coat, which was none too current.

This was where Flip Goodloe lived? Lenny shook his head. Flip could have had it all.

Building seven, apartment 4-D. Lenny rang the bell but heard no ring within. He did hear an acoustic guitar plunking away on the other side of the door, so he knocked. No answer. He knocked again, louder. The guitar



kept playing, but not loud enough to drown out Lenny's pounding on the door. The player obviously heard Lenny; it was just ignoring him.

Typical.

He tried the doorknob. It turned. He went in.

A pigsty. That's what it was—a pigsty. Whopper boxes fluttered in the breeze from the door, tumbling among Styrofoam Big Mac containers and countless candy-bar wrappers littering the floor. Dust everywhere. The rug had once been red—possibly; it was hard to tell in the dim light. Cobwebs in all the ceiling corners. Clothes strewn everywhere. Acrid smoke layered out at three distinct levels in the air of the room, undulating sensuously in the draft.

And there in the middle of the room, sitting cross-legged like some black-skinned maharishi, his emaciated body naked but for a stained pair of

jockey shorts, was Flip Goodloe, staring off into space while he picked and chordeed an aimless melody from the Martin clutched before him. His hair was a rat's nest, looking as though he had tried to weave a natural into dreadlocks but had given up halfway along.

"Flip," Lenny said, raising his voice to break through the noise. "Flip!"

Rheumy, red-rimmed eyes focused on Lenny through pinpoint pupils. A slow smile spread across Flip's features.

"Well, if it ain't my old friend, Lenny. Been seeing you on tv pushing those moldy oldies collections. You've gotten fat, man. You look like Porky Pig on the tube. Yeah. L. Weinstein, a.k.a. 'Daddy Shooq,' a.k.a. Lenny Winter, former DJ, former owner of countless tiny record companies—bankrupt record companies—and now known as Mr. Golden Oldies."

Lenny bowed—not an easy trick with his girth—more to escape the naked hostility in Flip's eyes and voice than to accept the sarcastic approbation.

"Oh, yeah. I almost forgot: former collaborator. I must be the only guy in 'rock who collaborated with someone who's never written a single lyric or note of music in his life."

Not the only, Lenny thought. Plenty of others.

Flip switched to his best Kingfisher voice: "Ah guess dat makes yo' de collatorator, an' me de collaborate."

"That's all water under the bridge, Flip," Lenny said, acutely uncomfortable. This man had no class—no class at all. "Whatever disagreements we had in the past, we can bury now. I've got a deal for you. A great deal. It'll mean your comeback. Chuck Berry came back. You can, too—bigger than ever!"

Flip's smile finally faded. "What makes you think I want a comeback?"

Lenny ignored the remark. Every has-been wants a comeback. He went on to explain the details of the ninth annual "One Mo' Once Golden Oldies Revival" tour, how it was going to be the biggest and best ever of its kind. And how he, Lenny Winter, out of the goodness of his heart, had decided to let Flip Goodloe headline the tour.

What he didn't say was that he needed Flip as headliner to put the icing on the cake, so to speak. The back-to-basics influence of the punk and new-wave groups over the past few years was having its effect, and

Lenny was going to cash in on it. Lenny had always been able to pick up trends. It was his big talent. It was what had made him Daddy Shooog back in the fifties. He sensed new interest growing in old-time rock 'n' roll, especially in the unpretentious, down-and-dirty, no-holds-barred guitar style of someone like the Flipper. Lenny could feel it in his gut—Flip Goodloe leading the bill would turn a successful, reasonably profitable tour into a gold rush.

He needed Flip. And he was going to get him.

"Not interested," Flip said.

"You don't mean that. What else have you got going for you?"

"Religion, Lenny. I got religion."

Lenny kept his face straight but mentally rolled his eyes. *Who's the guru this time?*

"Born again?" he said.

"No way. I worship the great god Doolang."

"Doolang." Swell.

"Yeah." Flip pointed toward the ceiling. "Behold His image."

Lenny squinted into the hazy air. Hanging from a thread thumbtacked to the ceiling was a wire coathanger twisted into an S-like configuraton ... like a cross between a G clef and a dollar sign.

"Doolang?"

"You got it. The God of Aging Rockers. I already burned my offering to Him and was just warming up to sing His favorite hymn."

"Is that what I smell? What did you burn?"

"An Air Supply record." He giggled. "Know what hymn He likes best?"

Lenny sighed. "I'll bite—what?"

"He's So Fine." By the Chiffons. Remember?"

Lenny thought back. Oh, yeah: *Doolang-doolang-doolang*. He laughed. "I get it."

Flip began to laugh, too. "You can also sing 'My Sweet Lord.' I'm not sure of Doolang knows the difference." He laughed harder. He flopped back on the floor and spread his arms and laughed from deep in his gut.

Lenny saw the tracks on Flip's arms and his own laughter died, strangled in coils of pity and revulsion. Flip must have noticed the direction of his gaze, for he suddenly fell silent. He sat up and folded his arms across his chest, hiding the scars.

"Doolang doesn't mind if someone shoots up once in a while. Especially if they've been blackballed out of the industry."

"Don't give me this Doolang crap!" Lenny shouted, angry with the knowledge that a hopped-up Flip Goodloe would be a liability rather than an asset. There'd be a constant risk of his getting busted making a score in K.C. or Montgomery or some other burg, and that would be it for the tour. Finis. Caput. Dead. "You're screwing up your—"

Flip was on his feet in a flash, his face barely an inch from Lenny's.

"Don't you dare take the name of the great god Doolang in vain! Your lips aren't even worthy to speak His name in praise! You'd better watch out, L. Weinstein. Doolang's pretty pissed at you. You've screwed more rockers than anybody else in history. One day He may decide to get even!"

That did it! The Flipper was completely *meshugge*. His brain was fried. He'd mainlined once too often. Lenny pulled five C-notes from his wallet

"Doolang's pretty pissed at you. You've screwed more rockers than anybody else in history."

and threw them on the floor.

"Here! Buy yourself a nice load of smack, a bunch of Air Supply records, and a truckload of coat hangers. Twist the hangers into cute little curlies, burn the records, and shoot up to your heart's content. I don't want to hear about it!"

He spun and lurched out the door, away from the stink, away from the madness, away from the sight of the man he had ruined twenty years before.

Twenty years ... had it been that long?

A third Goodloe song, "Goin' Home," immediately followed the second. Flip's music was starting to get on his nerves. He went back to where he had left his cigar. Smoke ran straight up in a thin, wavering line from the tip. Near the ceiling it curled into a twisted shape

almost like a G clef. Lenny gave it passing notice as he knocked off the ash, then wandered around the trophy room in a pensive mood.

Flip had accused him of screwing more rockers than anyone else in history. A rotten thing to say. Sure, a lot of them *felt* screwed, but in truth they owed Lenny Winter a debt of thanks for giving them a chance in the first place. He'd pulled some fast ones—no use kidding himself—but he felt no guilt. In fact, he could not help but take a certain amount of pride in his fancy footwork.

He had realized early on the power wielded by a New York City DJ. He could make a new artist by raving about the record and playing it every half hour, or he could abort a career simply by losing the record. Those were heady days. Every agent, every manager, every PR man for every label was pushing gifts, trips, girls, and cash at him. He took everything they offered—except the cash.

Not to say he didn't want the dough. He wanted that most of all. But he saw the dangers from the start. For obvious reasons you couldn't declare the money as income; but that left you open to a federal charge of income-tax evasion if a scandal arose. You wouldn't just lose your job then—you could be headed for Leavenworth if the IRS boys built up a good case against you.

So cash was out for Lenny unless it could be laundered and declared. It nearly killed him to say no to all the easy money being pushed at him ... until the spring of '55, when he came up with a revolutionary scam. It happened the day a portly black—they were called Negroes then—from a small Washington, D.C., label brought in a regional hit by someone named Flip Goodloe. It was called "Georgia-Mae" and it was special. Lenny had never heard a guitar played quite that way. It seemed to feed directly into his central nervous system. His sixth sense told him this artist and this record had almost everything needed for a big hit. Almost.

"There's just one problem," Lenny had told the company rep. "That name won't play around here."

"Y'mean 'Flip'?" the black had said.

"No. I mean 'Georgia-Mae.' It's too hick, daddy. City kids won't dig it." (Hard to believe now that he actually talked that way in those days.)

"He wrote it, he can change it. What's in a name?"

"Everything, as far as this record's

THE LAST ONE MO ONCE GOLDEN OLDIES REVIVAL

concerned. Tell him to change it to something more ... American-sounding, if you get my drift." The message was clear: Change it to a white-sounding name. "Then I can make it a biggie."

The black guy had been sharp. "Can? Or will?"

Lenny had been ready to do his silent routine and see what was offered when it struck him that he had just made a significant contribution to this Flip Goodloe's song. Fighting a burst of excitement that nearly lifted him from his chair, he spoke calmly, as if making a routine proposal.

"I want to go down as co-composer of this song and of the B side as well. And if I make it a hit—which I will—I want half credit on his next ten releases."

The company rep had shaken his head. "Don't know about that. I don't think Flipper will go for it."

Lenny had written "L. Weinstein" on a slip of paper, then stood up and opened the door to his office. "He will if he wants to get out of D.C.," he said as he handed the slip to the rep. "And that's the name of his new songwriting partner."

Lenny never did find out what transpired back in the offices of Backgammon Records, but four weeks later he received a promo 45 by Flip Goodloe called "Mary-Liz"—exactly the same song but for the name. And under the title was "(P. Goodloe-L. Weinstein)." Lenny began to play it two or three times an hour that very night. The record went gold before the summer. Half of all composer royalties went to Lenny. It was all legal, all aboveboard. It was, he knew, utterly brilliant.

It was not a stunt he could pull if the song came from the Brill Building or one of the Tin Pan Alley tune mills, but it became a standard practice for Lenny with new artists who wrote their own material. The trouble was there weren't enough of them.

Then it occurred to him: He had struck gold at the composer level. Why not get in on other levels? So he did. He started a record company and a publishing company, found an a cappella group with a few songs of their own, recorded them with an instrumental backup, and published their music. All without anyone's having the slightest notion that the famous

Lenny Winter was involved in any way at all. The record was then pushed on Lenny's show and more often than not became a hit. Lenny knew nothing about music, could not sing a note. But he knew what would sell.

When sales of the record had dried up and all the royalties were in, Lenny closed up his operation and opened up down the street under a different name. The artists came looking for their money and found an empty office.

Lenny followed the formula for years, funneling all profits through Winter Promotions, the company he had set up to finance his plans for live rock 'n' roll shows, the kind with which Alan Freed was doing hand-over-fist business in places like the Brooklyn Paramount.

Down the Road and Around the Bend," another Flip Goodloe hit, started through the speakers. Come on! Too bad about Flip being dead and all, but enough was enough. Lenny went over to the tuner. He noticed some wires had fallen out from behind the stereo system. They were twisted into a configuration that looked something like a dollar sign. He kicked them back out of sight and twisted the tuner dial a few degrees to the left until he caught the neighboring FM station. The opening chords of "You're Mine Mine Mine" by the Camellows filled the room.

Lenny smiled and shook his head. This must be oldies night or something. He had recorded The Camellows on his Landlubber label back in '58. This was their only hit. Unfortunately, Landlubber records folded before any royalties could be paid. Such a shame.

He moved along the wall to a poster from the fall of '59 proclaiming his first rock 'n' roll show. His own face—younger, leaner in the cheeks—was at the top, and below ran a list of stars, some of them the very same acts he had recorded and deserted during the preceding years. A great lineup, if he did say so himself.

The shows—that was where the money was! Continuous shows ten a.m. till midnight for a week or two straight! One horde of pimple-pussed kids after another buying tickets, streaming in with their money clutched in their sweaty fists, streaming out with programs and pictures and records in place of that money. Lenny had wanted a piece of that action.

But he had to start small. He didn't have enough to bankroll a really big show the first time out, so he found the Bixby, a medium-sized theater in Astoria, whose owners, what with the movie business in a slump and all, were interested in a little extra revenue. The place was a leftover from those Depression-era movie palaces and wasn't adequately wired for the lighting needed for a live show. No matter: A wad of bills stuffed into the pocket of the local building inspector took care of that permit. From then on it was full speed ahead. The acts were lined up, and he began the buildup on his radio show.

Opening night was a smash. Every show was packed for the first three days. He should have known then it couldn't last. Things were running too smoothly. A screw-up was inevitable.

Lenny shifted his eyes right, to where a framed newspaper photo showed his 1959 self dashing wide-eyed and fright-faced from a smoking doorway carrying an unconscious girl in his arms. That photo occupied a place of honor in his trophy room, which it deserved: It had saved his ass.

She had wandered backstage after the fourth show to meet the great Lenny Winter, the Daddy Shoo of radio fame. She was a fifteen-year-old blonde but looked older, and she was absolutely thrilled when he let her sit in his dressing room. They had had a few drinks—she found Seven-and-Seven "really neat-tasting"—and soon she was tipsy and hot and on his lap. As his hand was sliding under her skirt and slip and up along the silky length of her inner thigh, someone yelled "Fire!" Lenny dumped her on the cot and went to look. He saw the smoke, heard the screams from the audience, and knew with icy-veined certainty that even if he got out of here alive, his career as Daddy Shoo was dead.

He glanced back into his dressing room and saw that the kid had passed out. It wouldn't do to have a minor with a load of booze in her blood found dead of smoke inhalation in his dressing room. It wouldn't do at all. So he picked her up and ran for the stage door. By some incredible stroke of luck, a *Daily News* photog had been riding by, had seen the smoke, and snapped Lenny coming out the door with his unconscious burden.

A hundred and forty-six kids died in the Astoria Bixby fire—most of them trampled by their fellow fans.

Fingers of blame were pointed in every direction—at rock 'n' roll, at the building inspectors, at the fire department, at teenagers in general. Everywhere but at Lenny Winter. Lenny was safe, protected by that picture.

Because that picture made page one in the *News* and was picked up by the wire services. Lenny Winter, "known as 'Daddy Shoog' to his fans," was a hero. He had risked his life to save one of his young fans who had been overcome by smoke.

And when the payola scandal broke shortly thereafter in the winter of '60, that dear, dear photo carried him through. The Senate panels and the New York Grand Jury questioned everyone—even Dick Clark—but they left Daddy Shoog alone. He was a hero. You didn't bring in a hero and ask him about graft.

Looking back now, Lenny realized that it really hadn't mattered much what happened then. The whole scene was in flux. Alan Freed went down, the scapegoat for the whole payola scandal. Rock 'n' roll was changing. Even its name was being shortened to just plain "rock." Radio formats were changing, too. Lenny found himself out of the New York market in '62, and completely out of touch during the British invasion in the mid-sixties. Those were lean years, but he started coming back in the seventies with his series of "One Mo' Once Golden Oldies Revival" tours. He was no longer Daddy Shoog, but Mr. Golden Oldies. He sold mail-order collections of oldies on TV. He was a national figure again.

You can't keep a good man down.

A new song came on—"I'm On My Way" by the Lulus. A little bell chimed a sour note in the back of his brain. The Lulus had been one of his groups, too. Coincidence.

Lenny turned his attention back to the wall and spotted another framed newspaper clipping. He didn't know why he kept this one. Maybe it was just to remind himself that when Lenny Winter gets even, he gets even.

It was a 1962 UPI story. He could have cut it from the *Times* but he preferred the more lurid *News* version. The subject of the piece was Flip Goodloe and how he had been discovered *flagrante delicto* with a sixteen-year-old white girl. His career took the long slide after that, and by the time it had all blown over, he had messed himself up too much with heroin to come back.

Strange how one thing leads to

another, Lenny thought. Shortly before the incident described in the article, Flip had refused to give Lenny any further composer credit on his songs. He had called Lenny all sorts of awful things, like a no-talent leech, a bloodsucker, a slimeball, and other more colorful street epithets. Lenny didn't get mad. He got even. He knew Flip's fondness for young stuff—*young white stuff*. He found a little teen-age slut, paid her to get it on with Flip, then sent in the troops. She disappeared afterward, so the case never

let him go out and get some really pure stuff. A lot of it. And maybe that's why he was dead—because of the money Lenny had left him.

The Lulus faded out, followed without commercial interruption or DJ comment by the Pendrakes' "I'm So Crazy for You."

Another of Lenny's groups from the fifties!

He felt a tingle crawl up from the base of his spine. What was going on here? Coincidence was one thing, but this made seven songs in a row that



came to trial. But the morals charges had been filed and the newspaper stories had been run and Flip Goodloe was ruined.

To think: If it hadn't been for the teenybopper incident during the fire at the Bixby, Lenny might never have dreamed up the scam he pulled on Flip. Yes ... strange how one thing leads to another.

But Flip's overdose. Maybe that was really Lenny's fault. Maybe the five hundred he had left the Flipper last week—guilt money?—had been too much cash at once. Maybe it had

he was connected with. Seven!

Lenny strode back to the tuner and spun the knob. Stations screeched by until the indicator came to rest in the nineties. Flip Goodloe once again shouted the chorus of "Little Rocker" from the speakers. Lenny gasped and gave the knob a vicious turn. Another screech and then the Boktones—another group on one of Lenny's short-lived labels—were singing "Hey-Hey Momma!"

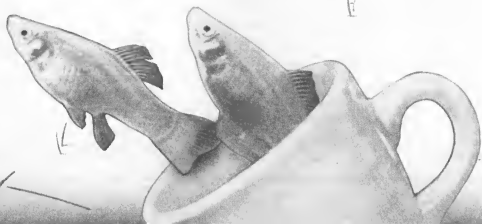
Sweat broke out along Lenny's upper lip. This was crazy! It was
(continued on page 98)



THE AGE OF FISH

CHAPTER XX FROM A HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

*When gills are in fashion, and scales a sign
of class, it pays to be a fish.*



by PATRICIA STOLL

Où sont les cannibales
d'aujourd'hui?

—NiceGénéral

The U.S. Supreme Court, twenty years earlier, had decided that women could not be forced to bear their unborn children; now the court ruled that they couldn't kill them either. This paradox was to be resolved by the American scientific community with all deliberate speed.

The government flooded scientific research laboratories with unlimited funding, and within eighteen months the answer was found (along with cures for acne, schizophrenia, AIDS, and three kinds of cancer): the regressive gill-gene vaccine. The vaccine acted on the principle that a human fetus, at one point in its development, has gills. When a pregnancy was interrupted (a law passed in 1997 forbade the use of the word *abortion* because of its negative connotations), the fetus was injected with the gill-gene vaccine. The fetus retained its gills and was placed in a large, communal aquarium to continue its prenatal development *in vitro*. Seven-odd months later,

technicians fished the fully-developed baby out of the water, slapped its bottom to make it breathe air, and it was "born."

As soon as this technique was more or less perfected, the government put an end to old-fashioned "abortion," and required that all "interrupted pregnancies" be processed through the new aquariums, which began service in January 1996. Soon the tanks of drifting babies, blowing bubbles up to the surface of the water, peering through the glass at visitors, were a common hospital sight.

In September of 1996, the first "gill-children" were born: 127,466 of

ILLUSTRATION BY CARL WESLEY



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them. In October, 128,932. In November, 130,003; *ad inf.*¹

No one knew what to do with them.

In the early 'nineties, when Right-to-Lifers had been immolating themselves on the White House steps, demanding an end to abortion, they swore there were thousands, millions, of loving families waiting to take in these unwanted babies, willing to adopt them and to raise them as their own. However, when prospective foster parents found out these babies had gills, they balked.

The gills were hard, iridescent, oval protuberances, each the size of an oyster shell, one on either side of the neck. They were, perhaps, no uglier than a navel (which the gill-children did not have), but the gills were a telling, visible mark of difference. "Each life is precious," the Right-to-Lifers had chanted, but apparently a life with a gill on either side of its neck was not. Government nurseries and orphanages filled up with these peculiar children.

As the government took on the legal guardianship of the foundlings, it was soon immersed in the joys and cares of new parenthood. The gill-children were graceful and lovely, as all water creatures are, and oddly mature for their age, having led conscious and sensate communal lives since shortly after conception. They were strangely aloof, yet could not bear to be left alone, and slept in piles of five and six in a single bed. It was difficult to keep clothes on them, and to teach them table manners, and they had to be watched carefully in the bath, lest they duck under water to try their now useless gills, and drown.

The costs of rearing these millions of children were staggering. Emergency taxes were levied to pay for their food, clothing, and housing; their toys, medical care, child-care technicians. Pervasive political observers

pointed out, down the road, the specter of baseball gloves, music lessons, orthodontia, and graduate school.

Even the naming of such a multitude of offspring was a major undertaking. Each child's first name was drawn at random from a list of the three hundred most common given names. The middle name was supplied by a computer programmed to invent words which resembled but did not duplicate any known names. The last name was invariably the code name of the hospital where the child was born. Thus: John Tef CookCo; Mary Zenq StLuke.

One result of this naming method was that the three hundred most common given names immediately went out of favor with parents of "dryland"

of them ready to enter first grade.

The government bused them to suburban schools where, it was hoped, they would assimilate.

All over the country, school boards attempted intricate legal maneuvers to keep the gill-children out of their school districts. Teachers and administrators went on strike, demanding double pay. Thousands of families pulled their children out of the public schools and started private academies. The gill-children, complained parents and teachers alike, had no interest in dryland culture; they were violent, dirty, had low morals and short attention spans, and consistently scored a full year below grade level on reading tests.

The gill-children were dubbed "fish," a hated epithet; dryland children went out in gangs to fight them. Gang fights were called "going fishing." Spray-painted pictures of fish on hooks appeared on brick walls.

Soon gill-children began, defiantly, to call themselves "fish," and called dryland children "bait." Terrifying Fish gangs sprang up; bloody battles ensued; atrocities were committed; police were hired to patrol school corridors and to ride shotgun on school buses.

As the gill-children grew up (they now preferred to be called Fish, with the capital F), more problems developed. Even with college educations, most Fish could find employment only as dishwashers or janitors and in other low-paying jobs without public contact. In vain, the government launched a massive anti-discrimination campaign,² and tried to coerce employers into hiring Fish: with equal opportunity laws, affirmative action laws, tax credits. Finally, quotas were imposed: by January of 2025, 10% of all employees, on all levels, had to be Fish.³

Nationwide strikes ensued, resulting in a number of shootings, maimings, dismemberments, and several fatalities. The National Guard (38% of whom were Fish) was called in.

Science once again came to the rescue. In 2023, Dr. Joanna Vol Southshore, a young Fish scientist, developed a drug which revived defunct gills, making Fish amphibious, and thus able to breathe either air or water.

Immediately, underwater employment opportunities opened up to Fish: all aspects of hands-on oceanography, underwater construction and farming, and newly created jobs in underwater entertainment, education, recreation,

Terrifying Fish gangs sprang up. Spray-painted pictures of fish appeared on brick walls.

children, and soon only gill-children bore the familiar euphonious names, while dryland children had to make do with the archaic (Hepsibah, Makepeace, Jephthah) and the fanciful (Sky-lark, LaMelle).

In an increasing number of subtle and overt ways, everyone shunned the gill-children, and this was odd, because people realized that they might be discriminating against one of their own children. All official efforts to integrate these children into the mainstream of life failed. By September of 2003, the government had more than ten million ugly ducklings on its hands, nearly two million

¹ Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstracts of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO 1996), pp. 78-82. All further population statistics are from this source unless otherwise indicated. Access code: CENSTAT.

² See *A Fish Could Be Somebody's Brother: Pro-Fish Propaganda 2000-2023*, ed. James Gak WhiteCross and Kyoko Atallah-Diaz (New York: Random House, 2097). Access code: WHATFISH.

³ One provision of the Equal Employment Opportunity for Fish (EEOF) law; passed October 2023 over President Kennedy's veto, who stated prophetically, "If this bill becomes law, blood will flow in the streets." "ZFK Vetos EEOF," *New York Times*, 1 October 2023, p. 1.

law, enforcement, child-care, law, medicine. One of the most lucrative jobs for unskilled fish labor was employment on the off-shore oil rigs, where men and women alike earned starting salaries of \$245 an hour, four times the national average. One of the government's early Aid to Dependent Fish Programs had granted Fish 100% disability status, so that they paid zero taxes. This status was discontinued in the late twenties, the government finally deciding, over the protests of a strong Fish lobby, that anyone earning \$245 an hour was not disabled, but not before a large number of Fish had become extremely wealthy and had bought up most of the valuable real estate in many seacoast cities and towns.

Suddenly Fish were In. They were rich, and young, and beautiful; suddenly business was interested in capturing the Fish market.

The population shifted to the South and to the coasts. Housing starts leaped 20% a year, necessitated by the sudden increase in population. Luxury condominiums were built in the Gulf of Mexico along the Florida Keys. These became prototypes for the so-called "Great Barrier Reef of Condos," the ruins of which may still be seen along the coast of Texas.

Underwater fashion was growth industry. Department stores installed underwater display windows and dressing rooms. Clothes were designed to look equally good wet or dry. Since Fish spent so much time swimming, their bodies were muscular and sleek and they looked wonderful in these skimpy, clinging fashions, which were always cut low to reveal the gills.

Drylanders imitated Fish styles, but with little success. Many tried to create gills on their necks with makeup and plastic surgery, but an artificially-created gill lacked the opalescent beauty of the real thing.

Almost overnight, the new movie stars in Hollywood were Fish—except for a few old-time character actors who were usually cast as villains

and/or killed off early in the films. New television genres evolved—the underwater cop drama, the underwater soap opera, the underwater docudrama, the underwater miniseries—and defunct series were recreated with Fish casts: "The Six Million Dollar Fish," "Charlie's Angel Fish," "F.I.S.H.," Fish music groups emerged: CARP (reggae revival); The Elvers (folk); and Boy Fish (nouveau rock) among the vanguard; popular dance kept pace: underwater discos date from this era.

Time Magazine's 2024 "Man of the Year" cover honored "The Fish," depicted in a controversial painting of the neo-realistic school which showed two young Fish—male and female—raising clenched fists in the age-old



symbolic gesture of revolution.⁴

Women gradually became aware of an obvious fact: they could take advantage of aquarium technology. They could interrupt a pregnancy and keep the child themselves. The advantages of this were obvious: a woman did not have to carry the child for nine months, spoil her figure, endure the pains of childbirth, take time off work, pay an obstetrician. She could, if she chose, complete her entire family in one year by starting several fertilized ova in quick succession. And, perhaps best of all, her children would be Fish.

Suddenly there were more Fish

babies than dryland babies. From 2025 to 2030, 42,783,549 babies were born in the United States, 40,583,420 of them Fish.⁵

(A few people, for religious reasons, still practiced old-style pregnancy. These included the Old Order Amish, a few die-hard Roman Catholics—though the Pope had blessed the aquarium method in 2005—and members of a cult called the *Lamaze*, who made a sacrament of childbirth.)

The whole world might have become amphibious in two or three generations if it had not been for the census of 2030, the first time that skin-sensor analysis had been attempted on a grand scale. In addition to asking the usual factual questions about number of cars, pets, refrigerators, television sets, toilets, etc., the government distributed electrodes to be clamped to a ring finger and plugged directly into the home computer terminal for fifteen seconds. At this early date, only a limited amount of information could be extrapolated from skin-sensor data: perceptual and emotional acuity, sexual preference, intelligence, psychological profile, chemical makeup, musical ability, and dream patterns, among others. But even with this limited input, census analysts were able to draw some startling conclusions about the American people.

Many of the findings from the 2030 census seem commonplace now: 62% of the population had low-grade lead poisoning; people with type A blood had longer and more colorful dreams than people with type B blood; in any given nine-hour period, 97.32% of the population had at least one thought about onions; and so on.⁶ But at the time, the report created a sensation.

The most controversial findings had to do with the Fish. The report revealed that, while in most aspects Fish appeared to be equal or superior to dryland individuals, there was overwhelming evidence of a serious congenital flaw in the psycho-moral-emotional makeup of the eighty-five million American Fish.

The report addressed itself to, and confirmed, the commonly held belief that Fish tended to be cold-blooded, even cruel, with little regard for others. "The folk expression, 'cold as a fish's kiss' seems to have validity," unofficially opined census bureau chief Zygmunt Kasprzyzyska.⁷

In the past, it had been believed

⁴ Kathleen Community, *Fish Power*, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

⁵ For statistics of Fish worldwide see Louis P. Nice-Général, *Une Histoire Courte Des Poissons* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 2071). Nice-Général's monumental, though dated, study remains a necessary starting point for the student of global Fish history. Access code: NICEFISH.

⁶ For complete readout of 2030 census data: Access Code CENS2030. Persons with casual interest are recommended to *Understanding the 2030 Census: A Layman's Guide*, eds. Susan Trin StFrancis, Thomas J. Wilson, Jr., and F.X.C. Hagan-Nguyen (New York: Random House, 2031). Access code: UNDERCEN.

⁷ Kasprzyzyska was officially censured for making this remark (on "Face the Nation," July 14, 2031), considered by all to be an ethnic slur, and he was demoted to head of the Environmental Protection Agency on August 1 of that year.

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that Fish tended to be emotionally detached because they had been raised in government orphanages and thus had not known the nurturing care of a loving mother and father, and the normal home life that is every child's rightful heritage. But analysts studied data gathered from 17,388 Fish who had been adopted at birth and raised by apparently loving parents who had given them every advantage, and found that even these privileged Fish were characteristically aloof. Even as toddlers, they had preferred the company of their fellows to any kind of normal home life.

Moreover, there was mounting evidence of more serious social disorientation. Correlational studies of the census information, demography, crime statistics, and popular culture since the turn of the century made it increasingly clear that a significant percentage of Fish, from all walks of life, were cannibals.⁸

Indeed, it was probable that all Fish, even the vast majority who were productive and law-abiding citizens, had latent cannibalistic tendencies, kept more or less in check by social pressures and learned moral standards—restraints that would naturally decrease in strength as the population became more predominantly Fish, and would lead inexorably to a cannibalistic bloodbath and perhaps the end of civilization in its present form.

Controversial as the report was, it only confirmed what had been common knowledge for years. Parents and teachers knew: Fish children had to be closely supervised; the game of "doctor" had given way to "shark," with sometimes unfortunate results; childish fights often ended with teeth marks on victor and vanquished alike. Psychiatrists knew: patients complaining of anthropophagic angst were increasing in number, as were scholarly articles about the phenomenon in learned journals of psychology and sociology. The police knew: magazines, films, and latex novelties catering to canni-

balistic fantasies were sold in the seedier adult bookstores and massage parlors, and violent crimes involving cannibalism had been on the increase for some years, ranging from the usual Saturday-night husband-wife assault/murder to the dread Piranha gangs that roamed streets and subway platforms and set upon hapless citizens, leaving behind nothing but piles of bones.

When the government recognized these sociopathic cultural phenomena and pointed an official finger at their probable cause, research laboratories went to work on the Cannibal Crisis.

Meanwhile, on the streets, cannibalism was suddenly chic.

Business recognized a new, affluent consumer market and went for it.

Cannibalism was suddenly chic. Business, recognizing a new market, went for it.

Clothing, makeup, automobiles, home furnishings, health spas, movies, tv shows, and restaurants, all catering to the cannibal taste, proliferated and flourished. Cannibal movies became as common as westerns had been seventy-five years before. Cannibal magazines appeared on the newsstands: *SweetMeat*, *Jaws*, *Eat Me*, *Long Pig*. Conventional magazines featured cannibal articles to boost circulation: *Parents' Magazine*, June 2033: "Understanding Your Little Cannibal from Two to Four"; *Family Circle*, July 2033: "Best Cannibal Recipes for Summer"; *Playboy*, October 2033: "Cannibal Playmate of the Month." Literature and art reeked with cannibalistic image, symbol, and metaphor. Cannibalism was the new eroticism.

Even dryland people took it up.

Though most had no taste for the aberration, many felt they should keep up with the times. Claiming to suffer from latent anthropophagia, many young drylanders frequented cannibal bars and discos and took to wearing tiny silver knives and forks on chains around their necks. Cannibalism workshops sprang up on the coasts. Typical ads (in *The Village Voice*, 4 September 2033):

Dial-a-Cannibal: Sex over the phone with Shirley and Diane. "The Ultimate Orgasm." Credit Cards.

Cannibal Runners: expand your performance through Holistic Nutrition-Awareness. Omophagia Institute.

Gay Cannibals for Jesus.

The Tao of Cannibalism. Workshop: Saturday, 9-5. Lunch served.

The cannibal craze was short-lived. In 2034 the scientific community released its long-awaited report, which stated definitely that Fish family life (or lack of it) was not the cause of cannibalism. Apparently, human beings required the experience of being carried about in a womb for nine months, and of a more or less traumatic birth, in order to develop such qualities of concern for others as kindness, mercy, and the distaste for human flesh that our society has traditionally held sacred.

The report recommended an immediate moratorium on aquarium implants. For the future of mankind, it would be necessary for women to return to the old-fashioned method of giving birth.

The government's plan for the changeover involved intensive dissemination of birth control information; emergency training of obstetricians and midwives; and classes in biological reproduction for young women—many of whom had never seen a pregnant woman—introducing them to the procedures involved in pregnancy and childbirth.

Some of the plan went smoothly. A safe, effective, and free method of contraception had been available for almost ten years (a method similar to the biofeedback-meditation technique now taught to both sexes in fourth grade), but had been practiced in a desultory way. The government disseminated this technique to the entire population in less than a month through daily television programs; classes in schools, workplaces, doctors' offices, depart-

⁸ From the beginning, the government, sensitive to unfortunate connotations inherent in the word "cannibal," tried to encourage use of the more scientific and exact term *anthropophagus* (pl *anthropophagi*) in its place. The cumbersome word never entered common usage, however, and now is found only in medical terminology and in certain early scholarly studies, e.g., Leon Rav Mitsinai, "Anthropophagically-Oriented Physical Education Programs in Three Dallas Junior High Schools," *Education Today*, 45 (2032), pp. 325-370.

ment stores; loudspeakers on street corners; door-to-door volunteers; and home computers (Code: NONO/HELP).

The pregnancy and childbirth classes for women were less successful. In October of 2034, all females between the ages of eleven and forty-eight were required to go to designated public auditoriums and meeting places where an educational film, *Wouldn't You Really Rather Have A Baby?* was shown, and an obstetrician lectured and answered questions. The slogan for the resistance movement which followed was sounded in Washington, D.C., by an eighteen-year-old second-generation Fish woman, who stood up in the middle of a lecture on morning sickness, stretch marks, labor pains, and episiotomies, and shouted "You want me to do WHAT?"⁹

In October an estimated 92% of the female population went on strike. For more than a month, women did no work, cooked no food, washed no dishes, provided no child care, cleaned no aquariums, permitted no sex. President Shimizu appealed directly to the strikers. Grandmother of seven Fish, she empathized with the young women whom she called upon to make this patriotic sacrifice for their country in *foro conscientiae*. When her words failed to move the women, she joined the picket lines herself. In forty-three days, the country was brought to its knees.

History has shown the stike settlement to be a fair one, though it was protested bitterly at the time by feminists who called it a return to the dark ages. Effective immediately, women who chose to bear children were given Civil Service rank, salary, benefits, and pensions. In addition, the U.S. Department of Women's Affairs was created as a cabinet-level agency in charge of the health and welfare of women and infants. The USDW, which proved to be a powerful agency, second only to the Department of Agriculture, effectively mandated the scientific community to study and find cures for the age-old problems of women: the ills of pregnancy and pains of childbirth; menstrual disorders and menopause; sexual dysfunction, rape and spousal abuse, cellulite, housework.

The following year, 2035, there were only 272,051 live births. In 2036 the number rose to nearly 500,000; within ten years the birth rate stabilized at nearly three million per year, about one-third of what it had been during the peak aquarium years.

The next forty years were truly

the Age of Fish, the most tumultuous chapter in our nation's history; nay, in the history of our planet. Then, slowly but inevitably the Fish aged, grew less active, and were no longer a majority. Though still cannibalistic, they were too old and tired to do much about it. They stayed home and watched "Eat My Flesh" on the late show and dreamed of the old days. Cannibalism was under control and became only one aberration among many in a pluralistic society.



Now only a few Fish survive; they are wheeled out on state occasions, like old Middle East War veterans. They have not aged well. The men in particular, after the age of about seventy, resemble old bullhead catfish: their mouths grow wider, their eyes smaller, their whiskers thicker, their teeth sharper. Parental warnings to the young to "Keep your distance from Uncle Harry" have teeth in them.

The Age of Fish will be studied,

perhaps forever, in institutions of higher learning. Twenty-seven state universities have government-endowed Fish fellowships and Cannibal chairs;¹⁰ there is a growing bibliography on Fish history, Fish philosophy, and Fish culture;¹¹ and a number of respected scholarly journals specialize in Fish studies.¹²

No people are dead whose art survives, and Fish influence remains strong in art, literature, dance, music, architecture, folklore, and popular cul-

ture. Critics agree that the dance has never since reached the perfection attained when it was dominated by underwater Fish dance troupes in the 'forties.¹³ Early Fish novels, poetry, stories, plays, and films, with their understated, mysterious cannibal imagery and symbolism, have been judged superior to later, more explicit works.¹⁴ A rich Fish folklore developed and is still being collected

(continued on page 90)

⁹ See SacredHeart Roth, et al, *You Want Us To Do WHAT? An Oral History of the 2034 Women's Revolution* (Detroit: Garden City Publishers, 2045).

¹⁰ Access code: FISHUNIV.

¹¹ Access code: FISHBIBL.

¹² See especially *New York Review of Fish*, Columbia University; and *Cannibal Quarterly*, Key West College. Access codes: FISHNYRF, FISHCANQ; general access code: FISHMAGS.

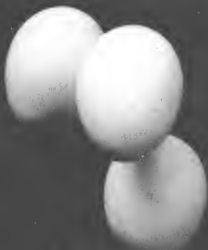
¹³ See Ziv Tren Baryshnikov, ed., *Four Symposia on Postmodern Fish Dance* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2083). Access code: FISHDANCE.

¹⁴ See *I Wonder Where We Can Go Now: Twenty Critical Essays on the Rhetoric of Cannibalism*, eds. MiSinal DiCarlo, Daybreak McGuire, Jr., and Lakeview Riverside (New York: McMillan, 2099). Access code: FISHCRIT.

SKA... ZIK!

They glided through the still streets, elegant, glowing.





by JEFFREY WHITMORE

"Ska ... zik!" That was an approximation. The "ska" part was more guttural. The "zik" was just about right.

"Ska ... zik!" the old man wrote on the back of the canvas. Then he lifted the painting back onto the easel and, in the lower right-hand corner, painted his name: Selwyn Cooke.

He stepped back from his work and smiled.

"Ska ... zik!" the three creatures said in unison.

"That's the spirit, lads," Cooke said. "That's what I like to hear."

Gaunt, unshaven, Cooke went to the window, cleared the soot from a pane with the sleeve of his bathrobe, and looked down from the fifth-floor loft to the street below. Not a human in sight. There were, however, about a dozen of the creatures. All identical to the three in his studio. They reminded him of a Czechoslovakian postcard he had once seen. It showed the Egg Girl. Carrying a basket of eggs, the little girl herself was shaped like an egg.

These creatures, though, had no arms to carry baskets. And they had no features. They were merely four-foot high, mother-of-pearl eggs.

Cooke didn't understand how they were able to glide about so noiselessly, but that didn't much concern him.

"Strange ... strange," he said

with a shake of his head. "The quietest damned apocalypse I've ever heard of."

He turned back to the clutter of the studio. The three creatures were looking in his direction. (They seemed capable of some sort of perception; Cooke decided looking was as good a term as any.) He turned again to the window and, with his forefinger, etched an egg girl in the soot. Then he stepped aside so the creatures could see it.

"Ska ... zik!" they commented jointly.

The old painter laughed. "Ska ... zik! indeed." He laughed again, but his laughter gave way to coughing and, pounding at his chest with his fist, he crossed the room to the sink. It was stained with paint and coffee, wine and age. He turned on the faucet and groped for a glass, but found only jars of paint.

"Goddamn," he said, coughing. He seized a nearly empty gallon jug of red wine. He spun the top off and cast it aside, then tipped the bottle to his mouth. Three good gulps and the wine and his cough were gone.

The three creatures gathered together near him. "It's nothing to worry about, pals. Age, rheum, and neglect is all." He laughed in a short burst. The creatures huddled closer.

"Well," Cooke announced, "I suppose I should go down and see what's going on in the world." He took off

the plaid bathrobe and threw it on the unmade bed.

With his robe removed, Cooke did not present the image of a dapper man. He wore a pair of baggy wool trousers tucked into well-worn army boots. His upper body was clothed in a ragged, paint-daubed sweater. What its original color had been could only be guessed at. A light hue—tan perhaps, or even white. Cooke himself had long since forgotten.

From the floor he picked up an ancient, Navy pea jacket and a nearly new wool watch cap. As he buttoned the jacket, he smiled at the creatures. "Won't you join me?" he asked. "This is bound to prove interesting."

The service elevator was at his landing. It wasn't roomy enough for Cooke and the creatures, but that didn't seem to bother them. They glided down the stairs and met him on the ground floor. And then the four of them moved out into the unfocused anger of a New York February morning.

There was neither snow nor even dirty slush on the ground, but the wind raging across Canal Street was a freezing demon.

"Aach! Miserable ... miserable," Cooke said. He hunched his shoulders and started up toward Washington Square. His three comrades glided silently behind him.

Cooke had gone only two blocks when he encountered another of the

SKA...ZIK!

egg creatures. It emerged from a doorway about thirty feet in front of him, stopped in the street, and began to hum. Cooke's three companions swooped in front of him and glowed slightly. The new creature stopped humming, glowed slightly itself, and glided away.

Cooke smiled. "Thanks, lads. It's my guess you've done me a good turn. I'll return the favor sometime, if I can."

As he continued on, he encountered more of the creatures and, each time, his protectors glowed him safe passage.

The quality of the city didn't fully strike Cooke until he reached the park. On Sundays past he had seen Thompson Street deserted, but never, in broad daylight, had he seen Washington Square empty. The silence was majestic.

The fly in the ointment was the rat in the park.

Big as a cat, it stared at Cooke, twitched its nose, and made an ugly little noise. And then, its hairless tail dragging lowly behind it, it began to stalk the old man.

Cooke looked about for a rock, a stick—for anything—to hurl at the beast. But there was nothing. He edged his way around and behind a park bench, as though that might prove a barrier.

The rat leaped up on the seat of the bench and scrambled to the top of the backrest. It twitched its nose again, tensed its body, and sprung toward Cooke.

"God damn your eyes!" Cooke yelled, as the rat flew through the air toward his throat. He flung his arms across his face and stumbled backward. As he retreated, his foot slipped on the grass, and he began to fall. His hands moved instinctively to protect his brittle body from the fall, and, cringing against the impact of the rat's attack, he heard a humming sound and saw a flash of light.

There was no impact.

There was no rat.

Not even a trace of matted fur.

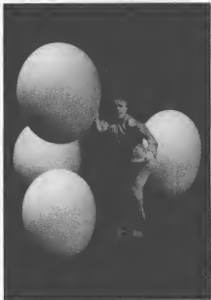
Cooke looked at his three companions. Their light dimmed; their humming faded away. "Well, well..." he said, rising gingerly to his feet, "thanks again." He grinned at the egg creatures. "The Three Musketeers, that's who you fellows are."

With no conscious purpose in

mind, Cooke headed up Fifth Avenue. As he hiked, he felt a tinge of regret that he had never learned to drive. There were cars everywhere, the keys still in the ignition. There were no wrecks. He guessed that the creatures had stopped the cars in their tracks when they... vanished... the drivers.

At 53rd Street he turned and, a moment later, entered through the unlocked doors of the Museum of Modern Art. It was warm inside. He wondered how long the buildings in the city would have electricity. The government had claimed the nuclear fusion plants would supply power indefinitely. Maybe, Cooke thought.

He spent only a moment on the first floor. The current exhibit was all laser-feld electrogel and crystals. The artists were (had been) engineers. Artists? Jesus, Cooke thought, even unto



the last day tripe prevails. He had witnessed a lifetime of such schlock and now, with the eternal supply of electricity, this contemporary tripe would be on display forever. World without end. Infinite tripe.

"Swine," muttered Cooke. He shook his head and climbed the stairs. He needed something less contemporary, less eternal.

And he knew where to find it.

He paused for a moment before entering the room. How many years ago was it that he had first come here? Fifty? Perhaps. He'd found solace in this room during the Pop, Op, Stop, and Plop Art phases. They had all passed, but the paintings in this room endured.

He entered and was seized with the same sense of awe that had always seized him. Of all those Frenchmen, it had been Monet foremost. And of all

his works, it had been the *Water Lilies*.

So, he thought, prepare to be enthralled, Old Timer.

He walked to the bench in front of the three panels and sat down. My God, what a vision that Frenchman had!

"Ska...zik!" Cooke's companions said.

Cooke laughed. "You like it?"

"I love it," the young woman said.

Cooke jerked his head around. She stood in the doorway. Dark golden hair with bits of copper. Green eyes. Full breasts. Long thin fingers. Modigliani more than Monet. But that was all right. And the clothes. One year away from the twenty-first century, and she wore brown saddle shoes, green woolen knee socks, a brown tweed skirt, and a russet cardigan sweater.

"Hello," Cooke said.

"Hello," she answered. And she joined him on the bench.

For ten minutes or so they sat in silence, until Cooke broke it with a question. "Will you model for me?"

She turned to him and squinted slightly. Near sighted? She smiled. With his pea jacket open, his paint-splattered sweater presented her with another kind of Monet. "I've never modeled before, but I'll give it a try," she said.

He extended his hand. "Cooke," he said.

"Better than I model, I'm sure."

"Oh, no," he said. "It wasn't a question. My name is Cooke. Selwyn Cooke. The Selwyn is silent."

She smiled. "All right, Cooke," she said, "and I'm Lily." She looked toward the Monets. "Perhaps that's why I love these so much."

He stared at her profile and furrowed his brow, as a memory of another Lily swept over him.

"Shall we go?" she said. "I'm anxious to begin my new career."

"Let's," he said, standing up. He gestured toward the three egg creatures. "These fellows are good friends of mine."

"They look very nice," Lily said.

"Ska...zik!" the three said in unison.

The internal combustion engine had finally got what was coming to it, Lily and Cooke decided, after she had tried unsuccessfully to start several cars. Undaunted, they made the trip downtown on a battery-powered golf cart that they found in a sporting goods store. Lily drove, weaving carefully through the maze of derelict

automobiles. The three creatures skimmed along beside them. On their way, they stopped at a gourmet delicatessen where Lily gathered provisions for a feast. Soon they were riding the elevator up to Cooke's loft. Cooke quickly gathered his paints and brushes and placed a new canvas on the easel.

Lily, nude, reclined on the bed. "An odalisque is in order, I think," said Cooke. He stepped away from the canvas and looked at Lily. Yes ... yes, he thought ... so like that other Lily. He stared at her as he had stared at Monet's lilies. He reached for a paint brush and a smile came to his face.

The three creatures glowed slightly. Cooke looked at them and his smile broadened. "You want to be in the painting?"

"Ska ... ziki!" they answered. "Then get behind the bed. I think you three will add immeasurably to the composition."

For four hours Cooke worked tirelessly. He hadn't felt such strength in years. After the first half hour he had asked Lily if she wanted a break. No, she had said, and he hadn't asked again. Finally, he stepped back from the canvas.

"It's done," he said. "May we see?" Lily asked. He turned the easel toward the bed.

"Oh, Cooke," she said, "it's beautiful."

"Ska ... ziki!" the three creatures said.

It was beautiful. Cooke knew. The Lily of the painting and the Lily of the flesh were beautiful.

"Cooke," she said, "come here to me."

When he reached the bedside, she reached up her arms and pulled him down to her. "It's beautiful and powerful," she said. As they kissed, her hands moved under the tattered, mottled sweater and moved across the muscles of his body.

Madness ... madness, he thought. I'm as old as time ... oldest man in the world now. But as his clothes fell to the paint-splattered floor, he became aware of his body. And it was the body of an earlier Selwyn Cooke. How strange to wear it once more.

"Oh, Cooke," she said, "it's been such a long, long time."

"Yes, Lily," he said, "it has been." The three creatures blushed slightly and huddled behind the easel, out of sight.

It was dark outside when Lily pulled the blanket over them.

"A nap now?" she asked.

"That would be nice."

"And I'll wake first and bustle about, and when you've slept enough, dinner will be ready."

Cooke smiled.

"And after dinner," she went on, "we'll go up to the Cedar Tavern and drink wine, and you can have loud arguments with the painters and poets, and then we'll come back home and make love again."

"Yes," said Cooke, "we will do that."

Then falling toward sleep, kissed on the forehead, loved with an old rare love, he slept.

When the service elevator creaked to a halt, the building superintendent and an ambulance attendant squeezed out. The super wore bright red ear-

Three oval figures emerged from behind the easel and began to glow. Soon the room was suffused with light.

muffs and a heavy knitted scarf with the ends tucked into his black woolen overcoat. The attendant wore a blue down-filled parka over his white uniform. His fur-trimmed hood was snugged tight.

Waiting for them on the landing was another, younger ambulance attendant in an army overcoat and black plaid hunter's cap with the earflaps down. He stood next to an old-fashioned canvas and wood stretcher that leaned against the wall. He had had to carry it up the stairway because there wasn't room for it in the equally outdated elevator. It had been awkward, maneuvering it up the narrow stairwell, but he'd still beaten them to the fifth floor landing. Going back down would be the real problem.

Inside the studio, the attendants eased Selwyn Cooke from his couch

onto the stretcher. As they started through the doorway, the old man's body arched in a spasm, quivered, and then relaxed. From his throat came an eerie, racking exhalation: "Ska ... ziki!"

The younger attendant almost dropped the stretcher. "What in hell was that?"

"Death rattle. You be getting used to it," his partner said. "And now they's no need for this old dude to sweat the stairs. He gonna ride first class. Me, I'll take those stairs."

"Me, too," his partner chimed in quickly.

The super looked at the senior attendant and shook his head. "I walk, too," he said.

The senior attendant shrugged. "Looks like you got it all to yourself, Lone Ranger," he said, propping the mortal remains of Selwyn Cooke against the back wall of the elevator. He pressed the down button and, retreating from the car, closed the outer door. As the elevator rumbled and clanked into action, the two men started down the stairs to meet their lifeless cargo.

The super turned off the lights in the studio, locked the door, and, with an involuntary shiver, hurried to catch up with the two.

They all arrived at street level before the elevator had completed its steady, noisy descent. The superintendent glanced at his watch impatiently and folded his arms across his chest. The senior attendant jammed his hands into the pockets of his parka and began to whistle "Blue Skies." The younger attendant leaned his stretcher against the wall. He shook a cigarette from a crumpled pack and placed it between his lips.

Before he could light it, though, the elevator arrived. When he pulled open the metal outer door, his mouth fell agape and the cigarette dropped to the floor.

In silence and in wonderment, he, his partner, and the super stared into the empty car.

And in the studio of the late Selwyn Cooke, three oval figures emerged from behind the easel and began to glow. As they glowed, they animated memories, hidden, lost, and neglected in the clutter of the room. They glowed ever more brightly, until the room was suffused in a resurrecting light. And then, transporting with them to another dimension the image of Selwyn Cooke and his Lily, Monet and his lilies, they faded and were gone. ■

F/X

Rollie Tyler can blow faces apart. He can hurl creatures of his own invention to certain death in outer space. In Orion Pictures' *F/X*, though, special effects man Tyler (Bryan Brown) discovers that actual violence isn't as elegant as the fantasies he creates in his studio, or as neat. And when he is forced to defend himself against real bullets, he fires the only weapons he can handle, illusions.

Director Robert Mandel (*Independence Day*, *Touch and Go*) is fascinated by the interplay between Tyler's invented mayhem and the real murderous forces Tyler must confront.

"When he (Tyler) takes revenge on the people who are his adversaries, he uses special effects; that's what he's best at. If he were to use weapons, they'd probably kill him because that's their game... We use the techniques of imaginary violence to get back at a real violent system. It's the identity of violence we're talking about, rather than the identity of self."

The premise of *F/X* is ingenious. Tyler is approached by the government to stage a fake assassination for the Witness Relocation Program. As far fetched as it may seem, the film's sfx man John Stears, whose work on *Thunderball* and *Star Wars* won him two Oscars, says he's been contacted on more than one occasion by parties with similar proposals.

"Let me put it this way, I've been approached at least four times to do these sorts of jobs, and although the money has been there, I've always turned them down because you don't know exactly what the strength of the operation is you have to deal with, and you could very quickly get out of your league."

"This is one of the reasons I'm doing the picture; it's really putting into action my worst thoughts about one of these jobs."

When Stears noted the fee Tyler was offered in the original script to perform the mock assassination, he was amused. "Rollie is a top-liner, and the price they had for the job was nowhere near high enough to have tempted a guy of that caliber."

Every once in a while the government needs to kill somebody. Sometimes it's just special effects. Sometimes it's for keeps.



John Stears, sfx man par excellence

The writers quickly offered their character a more attractive sum.

Stears, who serves as an advisor to director Robert Mandel, as well as the consultant on special effects, was anxious at first about Bryan Brown's (*Breaker Morant*, *The Thornbirds*) ability to simulate the touch of a true sfx man.

"I was just desperately worried whether he had the right sort of attitude to handle his hands. To my great amazement and total delight, he is absolutely one hundred per cent."

"For example, when he had to erect a screen, if he hadn't got his hands right the thing could have fallen down and he could have made a mess of his hands."

Although *F/X* will contain expert effects, they will not be on a grand scale. Mandel, who was hired by producers Dodi Fayed (*Chariots of Fire*) and Jack Weiner because of his strong work with actors, was drawn to the script because of the complexity of the characters.

"Not unlike *Independence Day*, the characters of this movie were the main attraction for me, and their motives, Rollie's motives and character flaws which enable the Justice Department to seduce him into doing what he does."

Tyler, an essentially nonviolent man, discovers his own murderous impulses when "some-one he loves"

is killed, Mandel explains, eluding any further questions about the plot.

Leo McCarthy (Brian Dennehy of *Gorky Park*), the tough New York cop, is a key part of the dramatic equation because he knows the ugliness of true violence.

"When Leo McCarthy goes into Rollie's loft and discovers a man who makes his living by creating violence for the movies, it's really an anathema to him," Mandel explains.

F/X is shot in Manhattan, but not the seedy island we have seen in quintessential New York films like *Prince of the City*. Mandel's vision focuses on the new, gleaming structures rising along East Side avenues, and the quick shifts of fashion he sees every day.

"I'm trying to make it extremely contemporary, so it changes by the day almost. It's not only the buildings and structures of New York that I look for, sleek, slim, glass, chrome reflective buildings, but also the people and what they're doing now. If I see something new and contemporary that I feel can be useful and dramatically justifiable, I immediately try to incorporate it."

Mandel, who has Miroslav Ondricek (*Amadeus*, *Silkwood*) to execute his vision, brims with excitement when he talks about his fine cinematographer. "The cinematography by Miroslav Ondricek is the most stylish and sumptuous and magnificent I've ever worked with. His images are quite extraordinary, and I think this will vastly separate this movie from the many others I've seen in its field."

In a thriller with such an unusual emphasis on character, the performances will be crucial.

Bryan Brown sees Rollie Tyler as an ordinary man in an extraordinary situation. "Rollie's a normal guy who hasn't particularly had to pay a lot of attention to life. He doesn't see his work as being special. I want Rollie to appear ordinary, so that when everything happens to him, it's like a bolt out of the blue—suddenly his life is at stake."

Diane Verona (*Cotton Club*, *All That Jazz*, *Wolfen*), Cliff DeYoung (*The Hunger*, *Protocol*) and Jerry Orbach (*Prince of the City*, *42nd Street*), round out the accomplished cast.

—M.B.

MOVIE

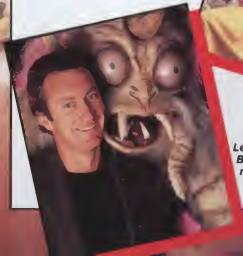
F/X

MOVIE

Preview



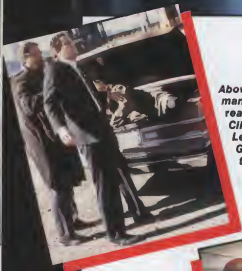
Above: The fiery work of real sfx man John Stears.
Right: FIX's sfx man, Bryan Brown, practices his deceptive art on star gangland witness Jerry Orbach.



Left:
Brown in a lighter moment with one of his less horrific creations.

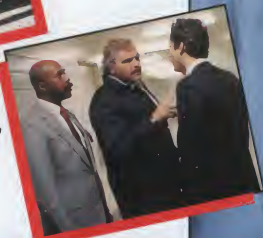
MOVIE

Preview



Above: Bryan Brown, sfx man par excellence, pulls a real gun on federal agent Cliff De Young.

Left: While Martha Gehman struggles in the trunk, Brown, incognito, surprises De Young.



Right: Lt. McCarthy (Brian Dennehy) pokes a formidable finger into De Young's chest. Captain Wallager (Roscoe Orman) looks on.



Right: Foam rubber "skeleton" of Rosebud, the sfx man's monstrous seven-foot creation.

Left: Brown tries a cord trick on DeYoung's neck.



THE TUBE FANTASTIC

ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS



Above: Hitch comes back in color to lay the sponsors low.



Left: James Coco and a bedridden Bob Dishy wrangling with a lethal deadline in "Playtime."

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

Above: Vincent Guastaferrro tinkers with his electronic dream machine in a futuristic Joe Gannon story directed by Tommy Lee (Halloween III) Wallace.

TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE



Above: Robert Rothman being mauled by an insatiable incinerator—one of the special features his landlady neglected to mention—in "A New Lease on Life." Right: John Heard in "Ring Around the Redhead."

AMAZING STORIES



Above: Steven Spielberg returns to tv where it all began, when he made his debut directing Joan Crawford in Rod Serling's Night Gallery.

TV's new anthologies:
they shine, they bite, they
laugh in the dark.

Watch out. Film is invading television. As Andrew Mirish, supervising producer of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, put it, "We are making little movies every week instead of episodic tv.... It's a refreshing change, and I suspect that is as true for *Amazing Stories* and the *Twilight Zone* as it is for *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*."

Of course, each show is ringing that change in its own way.

With Steven Spielberg and a crew of first-rate filmmakers, *Amazing Stories*, is going for the "little movie" idea in a big way.

Spielberg has signed up as directors some of the biggest box-office names in the business: Martin Scorsese, Joe Dante, Clint Eastwood, Irvin Kershner, Peter Hyams, Paul Bartel, and Burt Reynolds (who's also directing an *Alfred Hitchcock* episode). The list of first-time directors—actors Bob Balaban and Timothy Hutton, for example—isn't bad either.

How did *Amazing Stories* get such big leaguers? "Some," the show's story editor Mick Garris admits, "like Marty, are Steven's friends, or people whose work he has been impressed by. But most just felt it would be great to go in and shoot a movie in a week rather than a year... to have a finished film in much less time than it takes to make the usual feature."

Like Mirish, they're also excited by the freedom of not being locked into a given cast of characters or a static studio set. The budget for production (\$800,000 to \$1,000,000 per half-hour show, about what *Hill St. Blues* gets for an hour) isn't pinching them either. But, says Garris, "It's all on the screen. The show's a visual treat."

Lesli Glatter, director of the December first show, "No Day at the Beach," agrees. "The production design," she says, "is extraordinary. Each show looks wonderful." Her description of the sets used for her story—a WWII piece suggesting "that there is nothing beautiful or glorified about war"—confirms this. The first half is set inside a gigantic battleship, built just for the first act of the show; the second is a battlefield on a beach, littered with more than two hundred bodies.



Linda Purl in Hitchcock's "Revenge."

But how much freedom will Spielberg grant other directors? Enough at least for Glatter. She explains: "Spielberg visits a couple of days, but definitely gives you space. There's a sense of support. And he's an incredible teacher. He knows what he wants but he doesn't impose. He's wonderful to watch with people."

On the other, more controlling hand, Spielberg came up with the ideas for fourteen of this year's twenty-two tales. Most of the others came from supervising producers Josh Brand and John Falsely or the directors, and the only adaptation of a published story will be a piece by Jack Finney next year.

What does this leave the story editor to do? "Not much," Garris says with a laugh. Spielberg turns in one-to-seventeen-page descriptions of his story ideas, each of which, says Garris, "has a beginning, middle, and end... of mostly action." It's up to the show's freelance writers to do an outline and then a complete script.

The first shows—playing heavily on childhood and adolescent fantasies—were pure Spielberg. But others, says Garris, will range from the "fairly horrific" ("No Day at the Beach") to the "contemporary magic" of their Christmas show ("Santa '85"). Then there are stories like the ironic "On the Road" being shown December eight—"a touch," Garris notes, "of O. Henry meets Steven Spielberg," and, for those demanding more fear in their fantasy, tales like "Amazing Falsworth" deemed too intense for Sunday night family viewing and moved to a later hour Tuesday night.

Still, Garris says, there is a connection between all the shows: "What they have in common is that something, well, truly amazing happens in all of them. They are one step into Disney or into a world beyond."

As their new, color-improved image of Hitchcock suggests, the producers of the 1985 *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* are doing more than just bringing back the old series—they are trying to enhance it. The point, explains supervising producer Andrew Mirish, "is not so much to relive the past, but to use the old shows as springboards for new tales, to make them relevant today." He is not, of course, saying that there is anything *wrong* with the old shows.

But with 1985 technology and the freedom to spend more time and money on production, Mirish says, "We can open them up pictorially." For instance, while Hitchcock had only three days to shoot Joseph Cotton on a fixed three-camera set for the 1955 version of "Breakdown," the new crews can spend a week filming John Heard on location in Mexico.

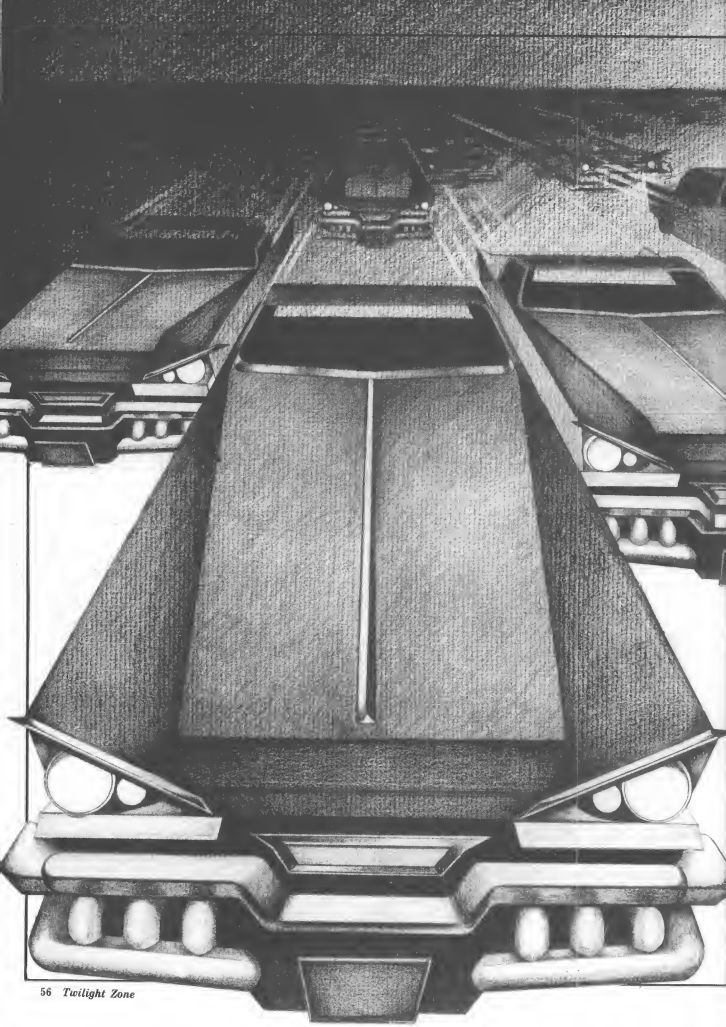
Although the producers are bas-

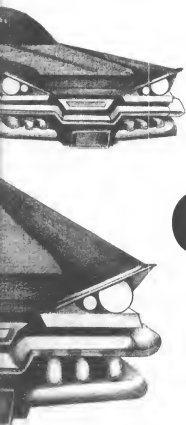


Bradford May (right) and J.D. Feigelson filming *Twilight Zone*'s "Burning Man."

ing their scripts on the original stories instead of using the early teleplays, they have not been changing the mood. Even with the license of the eighties, Mirish explains, directors today couldn't make Hitchcock any more grisly. After all, he says, "Hitchcock at his core is very dark. People are involved in pretty grimy crimes. There is a lot of adultery. We can just display it in more active ways. We can dramatize."

Still, even while they're excited about enhancing Hitchcock, they are
(continued on page 95)





THE CROSSING

*The cars roared ceaselessly across the black road,
black cars across a prison of highway.*

by PETER HEYRMAN

The day we buried my mother the Strip was hot and dusty. We could hear the rumble of the cars on the highway a half mile distant. There were only a couple of people at the gravesite. Folks on the Strip didn't have much taste for funerals. Death scared us on a daily basis, and life wasn't an easy thing either. Not with the highway.

I left the graveyard alone. If I was mourning, it was a mechanical thing that didn't have much substance to it yet. I hardly felt a thing. Still, deep down a sense of freedom was starting to work its way through my machinery. Because of that, I didn't go back to the house. Instead I walked toward the place my mother had hated.

It was also the place where my father would've wanted me to go. I'd never known him, but I heard people talk about him. He'd been a highway watcher, spending his days on the hill looking across the endless sea of cars

and concrete. The old drunk, Vern, had told me about him enough times. Vern would slobber into his whiskey, his face flushing red, and he'd talk:

"Yeah, your daddy, he'd watch 'um. We'd all sit out there watching, telling all the old stories. Your dad always said your great-great grandpa helped pave the highway. Maybe it's true, maybe not. I do remember your great grandpa telling how he was the first to see that the cars didn't have no drivers anymore."

"Drivers?" I'd asked.

"That's right. Used to be there was people in them cars, guiding them along the road. Leastways, that's what your grandpa said."



THE CROSSING

I'd read the books in the ramshackle library. Folks didn't go there much anymore, but my mother had taught me to read, and I'd taken the yellowed books from the shelves and pored through them. They were hard to understand, but I did find out what they called the reasons for the big highways. They were names like social strife, economics, and automation. I didn't know what the names meant, though.

Still, I looked at the highway with those books in mind. I thought about them on that day when my mother lay in the ground, and I stood on the hillcrest looking at the never-ending sheet of concrete with its rolling black steel. The highway curved around the Strip on both sides, tapering to points on the north and south ends. From those points it stretched forever. I tried to watch with the eyes of my father, and wondered if he'd seen the other side. All I saw were black cars reaching to the horizon.

I went down the incline and sat on burnt brown grass. The rush of cars beat at my senses. Suddenly I saw a shadow. I jumped. I looked up to see Vern's alcoholic face smiling a toothless smile.

"You scared hell out of me," I said.

"Didn't mean to. Sorry about your mother. Didn't know she was sick."

"Nobody did. Still don't know what it was," I said.

"Guess her time was up."

"It's the truth." For a moment we listened to the highway.

"Ain't been here in a while, have you?" he said.

"No. My mother didn't favor the place."

"That wouldn't stop you. Meaning no disrespect, but your mother never favored this place, and you used to come all the same. Not lately, though. Maybe you knowed she was sick, and was taking care of her."

"Naw. She never even let on she was sick till the end."

"Maybe she weren't sick at all."

"What're you talking about? She died, didn't she?"

"Maybe she died of something you can't see."

"Like what?" I challenged him.

"Like loss. Your heart ain't here,

Gary. It's on the highway. She knew that. She'd lost your daddy to it, and I bet she couldn't face losing you."

"I was home because she wanted me there," I said, setting my jaw to the job of saying it.

"Maybe she wanted you there, but didn't."

"Say what the hell you mean."

"She mighta just wanted a last look at you. Maybe she knew when to die."

I looked away from him and out to the swarming blackness. "The hell with you."

"Ain't no wrong in it," he said.

"She was just being what she was, just like you're gonna be whatever you are. People never fit together perfect."

**I stood
looking at
the never-
ending sheet
of concrete
with its
rolling black
steel ...
black cars
reaching to
the horizon.**

"Yeah."

"Okay, feel what you want. You'll figure it out."

We watched the cars roll. Where there had once been windows and drivers, there were now only black casings. The highway was anonymous. Its disguise was time. The highway howled with time.

After sunset I left the highway and its glare of lights. I stopped at the supply station to see what the planes had dropped. I found some deviled meat and canned juice.

When I reached home I went upstairs to my father's bed and smelled the odors rising from my mother's garden. I lay there as he had twenty years before, the night prior to his

famous trip. I wondered: Did he stare at the ceiling? Was there a smooth layer of moonlight across the sheets? Did he wonder about the moon the way he thought about the highway? I wanted to see him there, smelling my mother's roses.

He'd watched for years, fascinated by the cars. His friends would drink, or pull little sunfish from Strip Lake, but my father would stare at the cars. Others would come and talk, bringing a few shots of rotgut from the Strip Bar, and some would sit and watch with him, but my father was the most dedicated of all. My mother said it was because he was lazy. Vern didn't agree. He thought my father's brain was working overtime to see the whole road. My mother countered, saying Vern was feeble-minded.

Sometimes she and a few others would climb the hill, find their relations, then scold them, their voices ringing above the highway's noise. They thought the ones who watched were crazy.

Over the years some had tried to cross. Some were killed. Others faded from sight after hours of creeping through gaps in the traffic. The cars didn't offer much chance. When you dashed to a whiteness between the lanes you'd have to stand, often for hours, waiting for another opening. The sun, heat, and noise could drop you in your tracks. Still, the gaps came.

Some said that there had once been a time when the highway'd been small, and folks had crossed often. The books said that, too, but it was hard to believe them.

The trick to crossing was judging the gaps. Sometimes there was room to run twenty or thirty lanes, but the gaps were treacherous. A man could run too fast, then the cars would swarm up and put an end to him. Sometimes the gaps came often, sometimes not. The crosser could stand for hours. Few dared to sit. When the gap came you had to be ready. The heat and exhaust got to some. A few were killed running headlong into cars, as if they wanted to die.

Those who sat on the hill crossed every day in their minds. They waited patiently for their chance. The highway beckoned.

I've formed a picture of my father on the hill. It is from those who knew him, and from my mother, whose memory was twisted by his "betrayal." I could see him, too, in the diagrams

he'd made of the traffic. His drawings show the bait that the highway used to lure him.

The bait was mathematics. When my father left on that morning twenty years before, he had a bottle of juice in one hand and a diagram in the other. At eight o'clock he bolted, still clutching both. He consulted the drawing every time he made a move. He seemed to sense gaps coming. Folks said it was the math.

His progress was slow but steady. It wasn't long before you could only see him with binoculars. My mother came up the hill and watched stone-faced through the field glasses. Soon he was a speck. A wide gap opened. The speck moved, then disappeared from sight. My mother pulled the binoculars from her eyes and loosed a shriek. It was the loudest scream anyone had ever heard.

Morning scrapped my eyelids. I thought, Today you will leave here. The thought wasn't new. It was a step I'd known was coming, and it had been certain since I'd found my mother dead.

My father had been the last one to cross, and all he'd taken with him was fruit juice and mathematics. I didn't have the numbers. I'd decided long ago that if there'd ever been a pattern it had stopped after my father crossed. Maybe that was the highway adapting. All I'd take with me was a couple of cans of juice, a quart of water, and a can of deviled ham. I put them in a small sack, hoisted that of my back, then started for the door. I felt a breeze from the window. It would be a cool day on the Strip, but the highway was always hot.

For the last time I left the battered clapboard house, the home of my mother and father. It was the house where I'd been raised. Tiny pieces of me were left there, nestled like ghosts in the woodwork. I didn't look back.

The roar built as I walked toward the highway. A loud hum turned to thunder. The edge was close. I would climb the hill, then walk down to the highway's border. I'd done that a thousand times. But then there was the darkness, the rolling wall, and that was the farthest I'd known. The highway dared me to chance it. It was ready to swallow.

When the finger dug into my shoulder I nearly jumped into the traffic. I looked up and saw the shadow in the beat-up hat.

"What the hell are you doing here?" I asked Vern.

"Looking for you. Been looking at you for a while. You're crossing, ain't you?"

"Yeah."

"You come down her alone, mother barely buried, just like that?"

"Just like that," I yelled above the noise.

"Maybe you should have some company."

"Like you, old man?"

"I'm not so old."

I looked at his red-blotched face.

There were liver spots on his arms and hands. "Somebody's got to stay and watch me."

"Come on, Gary. In my head I've been crossing every day of my life. My feet want to go."

"You'll die out there, Vern."

"Then let me die."

"I'll let you, but I won't watch you. I've seen enough of that lately."

He pulled back. "Yeah, I guess you have." I knew he was going to stay.

"Hey, Vern."

"What?"

"Thanks."

He looked at me sadly, the flesh on his face so thin it barely hid the skull. He smiled a little, but didn't mean it. The smile almost forgave me. "I'll be watching," he croaked.

I turned. A gap spread wide. I was running. I crossed white lanes till the traffic engulfed me again, then I stood in the hell of the road. The sun baked me. After a while I took out the water bottle and took a sip.

"You fool," my mother whispered in my head. I could barely hear it above the cars.

"He'll make it," Vern replied softly.

Cars roared by. Minutes flitted by with them. The sun climbed, telling me I'd been standing there too long. My legs grew cramped. I shifted from foot to foot.

"Why?" my mother's voice asked.

"It's time," Vern answered. "He's got the blood of his father."

"Bad blood," she whispered.

Another chunk of time passed with the cars. Finally, a gap opened. It was only a couple of lanes, but it kept my heart from sagging. A moment later there was another, bigger jump. The running soothed my nerves.

"Come back," my mother breathed.

"Look back if you want," Vern

said. His empty mouth smiled. I turned for just a moment. The hill was a faraway wall. I thought I saw a stick figure at the top of it. Vern was alone, watching. I'd covered eighty lanes or more.

I settled in for another wait. I wanted more water, but I didn't want to waste it. I decided not to drink more till I'd covered more lanes. I was hoping for twenty. I went more. The next gap opened.

"Ooooooeee!" I shouted as I ran.

The gap was a yawning mouth. The cars seemed so far off I couldn't trust my eyes. I lurched through it, not stopping till I'd covered thirty lanes. At the end, I felt myself flagging.

"You'll go too far," my mother whispered. "You won't be able to come back."

"Face yourself," Vern countered. "Drink now," he said.

"And die of thirst later," she hissed.

Time slowed. "One more gap," I thought, "then water." But no gap came. The sun beat on me. Heat rippled from the concrete. I breathed exhaust and coughed. My veins tightened, and the jumpiness hit me. Terror was a dark roar.

"You'll die," one voice said.

"Take some water," said the other, but before I could get to the bottle there was another opening. I ran like crazy. Forty lanes. When I stopped I finally drank, and my whole body thanked me. I gazed back, and could barely make out the crest of the hill.

"I'm watching you," I heard him say. The voice was comforting.

The road was graded, built on a slight rise. I didn't know how high it got, but Vern had told me that's why we couldn't see the other side. I hoped that was the only reason.

There were several more gaps over an hour's time. Once I looked back. The hill was gone from sight. I saw nothing but cars. They looked like the whole world.

"Food," Vern whispered.

"You'll starve," my mother cried.

I got out the can of deviled ham. I ate half, then drank one of the cans of juice. I threw the empty cans into the traffic, then watched it bounce from hood to hood until it fell. Finally, a wheel crushed it into the concrete.

"That will be you," she breathed.

"Go on," Vern urged.

I looked ahead, and wished the cars would end.

(continued on page 94)





THE GIFT

It's a dog's life for a man with a ravenous retriever. But it can get even worse when he owns a double dog.

by RICHARD PARTLOW

I woke up in the early light, wondering why I felt uneasy, as if somebody had been watching me in my dream. My bed was shaking, and from somewhere nearby came a throbbing sound, like a heavy heartbeat. I inched my head up to locate the sound, then stopped as something moved in the shadows at the foot of the bed.

A shaggy mass leered at me just beyond my feet. My toes curled in the chill air, and I whipped a bare leg back under the blankets. I snatched at the window shade to let in the light, but let go when I saw that my movement made the thing agitated. The shade shot to the top of the window and took my heart with it.

"Teddi, you dumb dog! What the hell are you doing inside?"

In the soft morning light my mix of an Irish Setter banged her tail at the foot of the bed and blinked at me lovingly. I punched my pillow, pissed that I was awake, and pretended to sleep.

I heard a suspicious movement and cracked an eye open. Teddi had her forepaws on the foot of the bed and was trying to catch my eye, as if we were pals. She didn't believe I was asleep. She saw me peeking and her head bobbed up and down in smiles. She looked so goofy that I wanted to laugh, but she would have leaped up to lick my face and knock me out with her breath. Her pink mouth slurped.

"Down, Teddi!" I hate to be licked.

She dropped to the floor and swung her chin up to rest on the bed, her eyes watching me, sad that my face was going to waste. She slurped again.

Something crashed to the kitchen floor in the next room.

I glanced uneasily at Teddi. "What's that?" Her loving eyes blinked at me. From the kitchen came the sounds of snuffling and crunching, as if the garbage sack were being ripped open. The sound reassured me, because burglars don't want my garbage. I sat up, and my watchdog just gazed at me with love in her eyes.

"Stay!" If she came to her senses, I didn't want her to tangle with a strange animal in the kitchen. I crossed the bedroom, edged through the door, and pulled it shut as I turned and examined the kitchen.

"Teddi?"

The shaggy dog with reddish brown hair pulled its head out of the garbage sack and avoided looking at me, massive guilt in its eyes. *It was Teddi.* A bread wrapper was snagged on a tooth. The floor was a mess.

"Teddi! How the hell did you get here? Out!"

I crossed the kitchen to the backdoor, jerked it open, and held it while Teddi hunkered past me, her butt swaying in the air. Glancing back at me, she made her eyes small, and cracked her nose on the door as she went outside. She had trouble being in one place, let alone two.

"Good girl!" I let her keep the bread wrapper. She had earned it, and I had a lot on my mind as I dashed to the bedroom door and threw it open.



THE GIFT

There was no sign of Teddi in the bedroom.

I was in no mood to be cracking up. I put water on to boil for some badly needed coffee and cleaned up the garbage. Back in the bedroom, I sat on the bed and warmed my hands on the coffee cup. The scent of Teddi lingered in the room.

My eyes moved over the bedside table and stopped at a newspaper story about the hidden powers of the mind. It had amused me last night.

I thought about it. I had seen what I had seen. Teddi had been in the bedroom and in the kitchen at the same time. I glanced at the newspaper and wondered if I had a sudden gift that I hadn't known about. Could one sighting of Teddi have been in real time, my time? The other from the future or the past?

It was Saturday, and my family was away. I had the weekend to think about it. I added fresh rosemary to a frying potato, then put on the eggs and waited, half expecting a rainbow sign that the times were out of joint, that strange things were brewing. The eggs got crisp and looked like used ashtrays.

By my third cup of coffee, I was depressed. Surely, it had all been in my mind. Or worse, I had wasted a one-shot opportunity in a vision of my dog eating garbage. The potatoes were a mistake and I didn't eat them.

I drank a glass of milk and abandoned the kitchen, making for the living room couch and a rest. I saw Teddi through the living room window, nibbling at the flowers in the front yard.

I yanked the front door open and stood in the doorway. Teddi wagged her tail, then looked worried. She knew it was time to return to the backyard, but couldn't remember where she'd broken out.

"Teddi, get in here!"

She groveled, stumbling toward me. I felt better, and that made me feel guilty.

"It's okay, Teddi." She made a letter c with her body and rubbed her nose on my leg.

There was a sound from beyond the kitchen doorway on the other side of the living room. I couldn't see into the kitchen from where I stood, but I

could hear cupboard doors slamming and things falling to the floor. I grabbed Teddi by the collar, dragged her to the kitchen doorway—and stopped.

"Teddi!"

She rolled on her back in a mess of food and cans, ran her paws through the air, and blinked at me with her head upside down.

My hand felt empty; I looked down. The Teddi I had hauled in was gone.

"Out! Out!" I jerked the backyard door open. Teddi rose and ambled outside. I gave her a shove and slammed the door. To hell with the garbage on the floor. I hooked the wine jug and made for the living room couch. The wine went down easy.

I heard a slurp from across the living room. Teddi stood in the kitchen doorway, grinning brightly. The wine spilled on my shirt and sent a chill through me. Teddi bobbed her head in smiles and squeezed her eyes down to an impish gleam.

"Go on, Teddi! Get the hell out!" I wiped my palms on the couch.

"Out!"

She pounded her tail on the door frame. Her ears lifted and drooped.

"Now!" I threw a pillow at her. It stopped halfway across the room and hung in midair.

I forgot to breathe. I pushed at the pillow with my mind. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Teddi making bobbing smiles. My stomach lurched.

Suddenly, I was in the bedroom with my eyes on the ceiling, hovering over my bed. The bedroom door banged shut, and I fell to the bed.

I rolled over on my stomach and hugged the swaying bed, digging my hands into the edge of the mattress. I gulped air, aware of the distant sounds of the kitchen being trashed.

Damn! What had gone wrong? I had powers up to the eyeballs and no way to control them. I could get killed. My mouth went dry.

But what the hell had I done? Noticing a pillow on the bed near my hand, I tossed it into the air, willed it to hover, and watched it fall to the floor. No good. What was different now? I had thrown a pillow in the living room. At Teddi. So what?

Well, Teddi would not have liked it.

I went cold.

"It's unfair!"

I'd never had it. My dog had it! Teddi had raided the kitchen and sent her double to decoy me. And now that was no longer necessary, because she could move me around at will.

What else could she do? I thought about the times I had yelled at her. Could I fit under the bed if she came looking for me?

The crazy sounds in the kitchen had stopped. The house was silent, but I was not reassured. I couldn't stay in the bedroom forever. I had to check it out. I let go of the bed and moved quietly to the kitchen door, turned the knob softly, and looked into the kitchen.

Teddi's head was angled inside the bottom shelf of the open refrigerator. Her face was in the leftover spaghetti, and her shaggy tail flew around in a happy arc.

"Good girl," I said with feigned approval. I didn't want to be flown to the roof of the house. Her tail stopped and so did I, holding my breath. Her tail began to swing, and I began to breathe again.

I reached for the dog food cupboard and yanked the door open. "Hey!" My voice croaked. "Oh hey, look at this, Teddi! Yum! Yum!"

I rattled the kibble bag. Teddi jerked her head out of the refrigerator and studied me, her tail rigid.

I avoided her eyes. *Did she know that I knew that she could do things?* Did she care? I forced a hearty smile and carried the bag outside to the back of the house. Teddi followed me to the water faucet below the kitchen window. As I chained her to the water pipe, she tunneled her head inside the kibble bag.

Back inside, I locked the backyard door and jammed the back of a chair under the doorknob. Dealt with her before she dealt with me. It was hard to think with her tail pounding the outside wall. The hollow sound echoed through the house as if I weren't there.

Teddi barked.

"Eat, bark, shut up!" I grabbed a paper sack that was on the sink and opened the kitchen window. "Gimme a break!" I lowered the sack, then saw it was full of yellow onions. I yanked it back inside. It was an honest mistake; I hoped Teddi understood.

Teddi cocked her head up at me and wriggled her eyebrows.

I slurped.

An image of a liver-colored dog biscuit loomed in my head. Eagerly I fetched the box of dog biscuits from the cupboard. My mouth watered as I lowered the box through the window. It was a tight fit. I banged my nose. Teddi sat, looking up at me, waiting for the box to rattle. I gave

the box a shake, enjoying the rich nuggety sounds; my tongue darted over my lips. I gave the box another shake and banged my nose again. The biscuits fell in front of Teddi, and they vanished.

I cleared the window frame safely and rinsed my mouth with a splash of white wine. I tried to think, but the sound of the biscuit box outside had me rattled. It had not been a full box. What would Teddi do if she wanted more food and I didn't have any? I looked in the refrigerator, but the spaghetti was gone, and there was only beer and soda. I remembered that Teddi liked to poke around my neighbor's garbage. I phoned him.

He asked why his garbage was special. "For compost," I said. "To share?" "Fifty-fifty," I assured him. Did I want his leaves? No, just his garbage, over the fence, and right now.

He would think about it.

I hung up so he could reevaluate his garbage. In the yard the biscuit box sounded nearly empty. My own head was feeling that way, too. I had to get away so I could think.

The old pickup was parked in the front driveway. I sat behind the wheel, held the door open, and let the truck roll silently down the road until the house was out of sight. I slammed the door, threw the truck in gear, and took off. Where the hell was I going?

I saw that I was gaining on the highway patrol car up ahead. So I floored it. Jail would be better than what I had now. It was a likely destination for a whacko with a crazy dog story. Then, upon reflection, I slowed to 55; leaving town was an even better idea.

I heard a slurp on the seat beside me and felt a quick little lick on the neck.

Damn! Next to eating, Teddi loves rides, the longer the better. Her tail thumped on the truck seat. I could hear the door window on the passenger side sliding down. Teddi liked to flutter her lips in the wind.

I looked at Teddi. "Where are we going?"

She turned to me and grinned, then stared straight ahead.

I picked a middle lane and glanced again at Teddi.

"Okay if I drive?"

Teddi's eyebrows bunched in thought, and a lopsided smile spread over her face. My heart sank. She wagged a paw at me and turned to her window. Her stomach growled.

I wondered where we would stop for lunch. ■

PILLAGING POE

Loftus dealt in bootleg tapes. She had ripped off Dickens, and Plato, too. But Poe made her dream of more forbidden games.

by A.R. MORLAN

"**D**im was its little disk," Poe, a slender man with lady-killer grey eyes and a neatly mended tan waistcoat, paused, lowered his resonant voice to a conspiratorial hush, "and /Angel eyes alone could see the phantom in the skies/ When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be..."

Loftus, modern tape bootlegger, wished that a wind, any kind of a wind—be it from sea, land, or ceiling fan—would blow through this dingy lecture hall where she now sat; the combined fumes of greasy hair pomade, infrequently washed skin, and tracked-in horse emissions reminded her of stale basement floors and glide truck station washrooms. Not that any of the Locations were a bed of soyablossoms, but Loftus especially dreaded doing her job (a.k.a. pirating) in enclosed spaces like this. Her last (only) really pleasant assignment had been getting Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* last month—summers in ancient Greece were all the better for the lack of smog and fallout. It was definitely worth the week she spent holed up in her dorm room with the Berlitz ancient Greek tapes.

Granted, those repeat trips she undertook before second semester fees were due—six of them in all, resulting in the complete five-compact-disc set of Dickens reading *Oliver Twist* had been brutal, and by the last day in the Past she was tempted to risk the mandatory prison term by breaking the "No Gifts/No Souvenirs" rule at good old Time Vacations, Inc., and leaving

behind a few paltry trinkets and baubles for the natives: roll-on anti-perspirant, a case of mouthwash, a can or two of foot powder.

But at least at the Dickens Locations, sometime in the late fall, the cold kept down some of the stink. As she sat on a hard fold-up chair in the front row of this dank lecture hall, Loftus wasn't certain if it was July, August, or perhaps early September. Nor was she sure of the city (Baltimore? Boston? Richmond?), but whenever or wherever she was, it was muggy. She could feel her stockinged legs sticking to the hard varnished hall chair through her circa 1840 "Native Epochal Garment," e.g. a yellow-checked long dress, a flimsy costume manufactured from the soyaprotein glop stored in the vat under the southeastern branch of Time Vac.

Breathing through her mouth helped. A little. Yet Loftus really couldn't bitch about the conditions in this Location, not after she had begged Wagnall, the boss and master bootlegger at Past Masters Recordings to let her make this run, to let her secretly tape this Past Master reading, his work. Part of her pleading involved her supposed major in college—American literature of the early nineteenth century... and her profound academic interest in the Past Master himself.

Not that she had had to grovel. Summer sessions—indoor summer sessions—weren't popular with any of the "employees" (read: pirates, sound thieves, tape runners, mules, etc.) at Past Masters, and since reliably docu-



ILLUSTRATION BY CARL WESLEY



PILLAGING POE

mented, *dated* events in the past couldn't be rescheduled during periods of nice weather, Wagnall usually had to beg for runners when it came to readings in closed, hot places. But sometimes her coworkers needed the overtime pay given on assignments like this one, so Loftus did some fast talking.

That night, Wagnall called up his graveyard-shift buddy at Time Vac, some money passed under the hypothetical table, a specific date was punched in at one of the Time Vac Computer Terminals, a modified item was added to the "Native Epochal Garments" package issued to Loftus, and seventeen seconds later Loftus found herself in a wet alley behind a brick meeting hall—a pretty good ruse for a business and Econ major at Florida State, currently working on the theory of the Daisy Chain for her finals. Her micro-recorder was hidden in something Wagnall called a "reticule" (Loftus thought it looked more like a purse), which also contained a little plastic and metal dealybob called a "Transtime Locator Alarm," her sole link with her own time.

"We paus'd before the heritage of men./ And thy star trembled—," Poe's voice poised on the verge of heart-break and ecstasy, "as doth Beauty then!"

But this time, *this time*, Loftus wished to God—if She was listening—that she could chuck the Transtime Locator Alarm, just pitch it in the nearest dustbin, and stay here, bad stinks, manure on the streets, and all. She may have been wearing the Epochal clothing of a child—since people of her time looked childlike due to genetic devolution and a little friendly nuclear patty-cake—but Loftus's desire to stay was anything but childish.

Perhaps her reason for coming here was based on a desire so adolescent, so damned *girlish*, that thinking rationally about it made her face grow hot with amused shame. Perhaps she shouldn't have let a fancy so unrealistic lead her to this place, to this person. *I hurt, hurt bad.*

Suddenly she could see the wisdom in the Time Vac Code: Do Not Disturb. Passive observation was the rule at Time Vac; it never paid to try to make friends with people who were most likely dust beneath your

feet back in your own time. Better to sit back and let the recorder do the work, let it impassively take back a little fragment of escaped life.

Having finished the poem, Poe lightly licked his thin lips, then softly began, "Kind solace in a dying hour/ Such, father, is not—"

"Tamerlane." One of Loftus's favorites. Yet the pain she felt could not be lessened by the fact that her

**It never pays
to befriend
people who,
in your own
time, are
dust beneath
your feet.
But Poe was
so alive, so
close to her.**

idol was now speaking the words she had often read silently to herself through self-indulgent tears in her childhood.

Once she had seen a show on the Holovision in the basement of her dorm, an old 2-D documentary from the late 1980s called "Sing Blue Silver" about an English band with the echo-holic name of Duran Duran. While they played onstage, young girls began screaming, fainting, and had to be hauled off to the stadium infirmaries.

That night, sitting in a pneumatic lounge in the dorm basement, Loftus felt no kinship to the screeching little

adolescents moving flatly across the screen before her. But here, on this rear-killing chair, surrounded by these hugh, stinking beings, Loftus understood exactly how those girls at that music concert felt. Only *they*, if fate and backstage passes allowed, could talk to and touch and maybe—if they were sensitive enough not to slobber—exchange ideas, feelings, opinions with those improbably doll-like young musicians.

There may have been a thousand, ten thousand of them, and only five fellows to fight and cry over, but they had a *chance*. They didn't face a fine or a jail sentence for talking to them and possibly fouling up centuries of history, or eliminating countless lives, countless destinies. They never had to worry about certain execution if they gave one of those men a note saying they cared, that they were touched by the words, the music.

"O yearning heart! I did inherit/
Thy withering portion with the fame,
The searing glory—"

When Poe first published this poem in 1827, Loftus thought bitterly, it sold for the grand sum of 12½¢ per copy. Just a hundred years later, one copy sold for \$11,000 in New York City.

And when I finish taping this poem, this evening's performance, you poor, doomed creature, Wags will cut a master and sell the disks for over twenty-five thousand credits a copy. And he will press a million copies in the first run alone. As many as he can sell before the law hears about this one. Not that the law could help you much, my friend. You don't have any relatives left to pay royalties to. Nobody left to receive the money Time Vac should pay you, but can't. (That's a law they won't break.) And you were poor, are poor, trapped as you are in this Time, your Now....

"The heritage of a kindly mind,/ And a proud spirit which has striven/ Triumphant with human kind," the paper and paste scroll gently tapped against Poe's knees, as it gradually lowered to the floor. Not subtle, but dramatic. Must have gotten the flair from his actor parents; a move of the chin, that commanding presence.

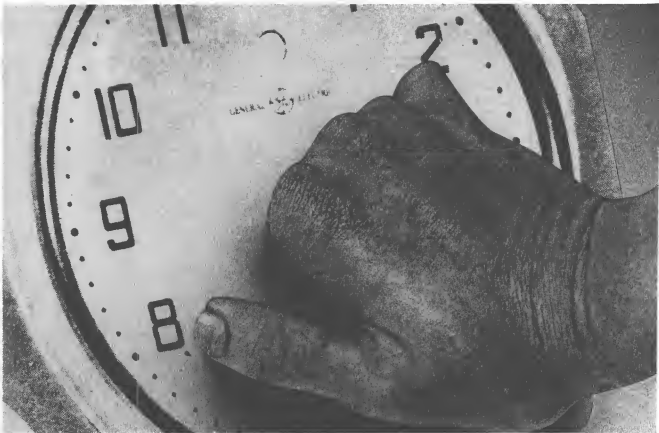
The other Past Masters Loftus had dropped in on and clandestinely ripped off may have been better writers. Or more prolific. Or both. Dickens could do more with his voice; he had a greater range, a better gift of characterization. Shakespeare was fluency and grace itself. And Byron had a raw sexuality (maybe a bit too

kinky for Loftus) and a voice to match. Loftus never regretted taping them and bringing back their work. She never hesitated to press that red button on the underbelly of her Locator Alarm once she finished at a Location. The ethics of the situation, the cheating nature of the whole set-up, the money these people would never earn from their own efforts—Loftus didn't let herself think about things like that. Take the credits and run to the nearest Credi-Stor, fatten up her account by a few hundred credits per run. Most of the people she had taped had had the attention, the adulations, and the bucks in their own

Sure, Loftus thought, after you were dead a few years, the French turned you into an icon, and eventually someone scraped up enough money to buy you a real tombstone. Sure, you're the unofficial poet laureate of the junior high crowd, the place where I discovered you. You got your face put on a postage stamp, and some guy wrote an opera about your life. Would it make you happy to know that you got elected to the Hall of Fame of Great Americans? Would it pay the bills and ease the demons and make your wife well again? She's gonna die, you know—TB. The cure for it was invented only a couple of hun-

disintergrate. A man named Roger Corman made a frigging mint turning your stories into schlock-art films. Sometimes he'd even use your plots.

"I was ambitious, have you known/ The passion, father? You have not —" that tireless, silken voice, as beautiful as Loftus had often imagined it. Looking up at the one person she had often prayed to see alive, she kept thinking, *You're going to die—and die so badly! You're going to pass out near a place called Ryan's Saloon on Lombard Street in Baltimore after wandering around God knows where on a five-day toot, and then you'll get the DTs worse than*



lifetimes. She had never been upset before.

But she was upset now. Here she was, sitting almost within touching distance of a man who probably never saw more than \$1,000 all at once, who only received a modicum of critical and popular support, and who wound up saying, shortly before the DTs got the better of him in the Washington College Hospital, that the kindest thing someone could do to him would be to blow out his brains.

The kindest thing ...

"It was but man, I thought, who shed/ Laurels upon me: and the rush—"

dred years too late to help Virginia, but what the hell, that's progress. Your trusted literary executor is waiting to screw you royally and trash your name and reputation. He's just aching to turn you into a synonym for "degenerate."

Just this afternoon Wagnall had said, "You still interested in this lecture date for that booze-hound, Poe?" Know what was really wrong with you? A little screw-up in the genes. Something called "congenital alcohol dehydrogenase deficiency syndrome." Last year a Dutch scientist developed an in utero test for it. Last year in 2367. Just in time for your dust to

ever before, until you're talking to the things crawling on the blank walls, and then ... after a quiet rest, you will turn your head and say "Lord, help my poor soul," and die without your aunt or fiancée knowing you're gone ... a man you knew slightly named Charles Dickens will give your aunt \$1,000 after he finds out you've kicked the old bucket ... but you'll still be dead. Even as I hear you. Even as I see you.

"Firmly do believe—/I know—for Death who comes for me/ From regions of the blest afar—" his scroll was almost touching his insteps now,

(continued on page 71)

Sussman's wrist alarm went off, firing an arrow of sound into his brain. He blinked his eyes open, twisting reflexively against the sheets as his dream was obliterated by startled consciousness. He had been dreaming about products, scores of them, all anthropomorphic—an artificially flavored, colored, scented, and wettened soft drink called Subliminade that, smiling like a lunatic, reached up and helpfully snapped its own cap to the delectation of the thirsty mouth hovering near its top; a cheese wheel whose wedges formed a chorus line that kicked its way into a display of party hors d'oeuvres; a shroud-like creature made of disposable white tissues that wafted itself into a human hand with a self-sacrificing murmur of, "God, I love it when you wad me up"; a mobile home computer whose screen bore the features of the ancient happy face symbol—two dots and curved line; and so on.

Statistics flickered through his mind. He had to get to work. To his report.

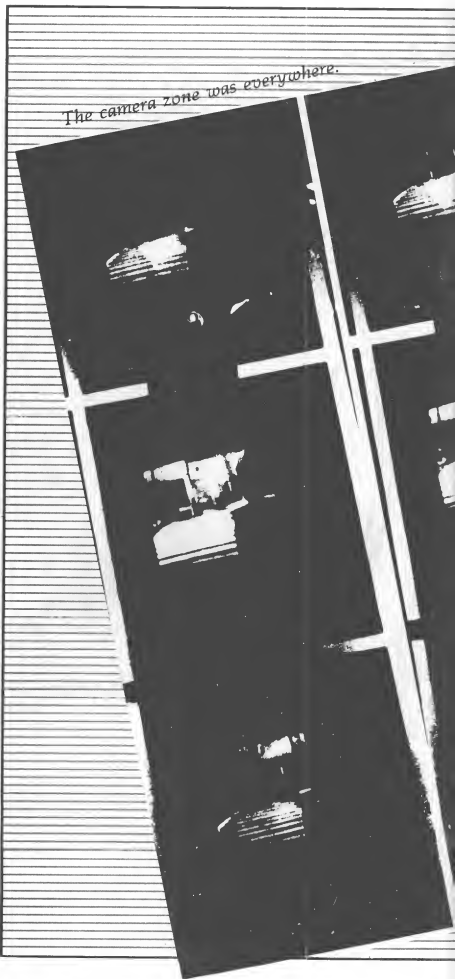
Sussman threw off the sheets and rose. His wrist screen came alive with a video image of a huckster imploring him to come on down to the Electronic Flea, where they were having a bargain-basement special on seashell nativity scenes and Swiss weather cottages. The huckster's mouth absorbed the screen, which went black. Moments later in the bathroom, while Sussman brushed his teeth, a split-screen montage of six separate weather people cluttered the wrist screen, variously singing, announcing, and performing impressions of the day's weather forecast.

He took off the wrist screen to get in the shower. The mirror, having pre-empted the imagery of its surroundings, had gone vid and was playing Bad Fruit's new video, "Puffed Lingerie." Sussman danced to the music under the spray, poking his head through the curtain every now and then to catch a glimpse of the video: women with luminous black lipstick and nail polish, dueling with tubes of white frosting.

Sussman felt the cool cameras on him. He wondered—anxiously—who was watching now.

Drying himself, Sussman, gazed at a Cronkite android reading the news. McVideo had just put up its new sign nationwide: over 43 billion viewed! Eye Candy stocks were up. The Couch Potatoes had gotten their candidate on the presidential ballot.

The camera zone was everywhere.





TELEVISION

Mid-air commercial holograms had been legalized in New York. Television magazines had perfected sound to go with their moving pictures (and some people were warning of the dangers of radiation from the animated page). HTV, the hypnotists' channel, had gotten its license, in spite of opposition from the CIC (Citizens for an Inviolable Consciousness). A group of occultists in Longview, Washington, claimed that the ghost of Ed Sullivan had appeared at their seance and they had the videoplasm to prove it.

The stars had been cancelled for the coming Fourth of July celebration, the ten major networks having optioned various parts of the heavens for patriotic programming, and *TV Guide* had applied for statehood.

He thought of his report, finally printed out, pristine. The thought gave him a long VDT thrill.

Sussman watched the news and part of a game show, *Praying for Prizes*, on a wall screen as he dressed. He selected his test pattern tie and a purple aluminum dress (crossdressing was in vogue because of the key letters in TransVestism). He watched Suddenly Ugly's video of "Actions Speak Louder Than Wounds" on his wrist screen while his car drove him to work.

It was funny how he could feel the cameras. They made his skin prickle.

He watched six split-screen versions of the news simultaneously on the table screen while eating a tv breakfast at McVideo. As he entered the elevator in the Farnsworth Building, he felt a surge of excitement. Today he would finish it, the report for the Central Bureau of Television Research, a federal agency that had been doing top secret work on television theory. His job was to summarize a study that had cost as much as the annual income of all of the television repairmen in West Hollywood.

In his office Sussman turned on his word processor. He worked eagerly through lunch, ignoring the camera that kept following him around the office, and then trotted to the arcade up the street, slipping into a cubicle to watch a Penthouse letter. Guccione's roaring countenance, in parody of the MGM lion, never failed to make him laugh.

Sussman worked hard on the report through the afternoon and finished by five. Satisfied, he scrolled it

one more time, freezing it at his favorite passages.

TELE-VISIONARIES by Caesar Sussman

Visions, whether the product of imaginative contemplation or ostensible supernatural revelation, are self-generated. Using this fact as a premise for their experimentation, Dr. Huntz Stuntman and Dr. Alias Trundler of the Center for Video Studies in Omaha, working on a grant provided by the Pure Food for Thought Administration, are investigating the possibility of self-

Sussman chuckled. The entertainment value of ESP-TV was awesome. Every man his own station. Every woman her own schedule.

He scrolled to another quote, wondering whether the cameras were still on.

"... and think of the middle people who would be eliminated on ESP-TV," Dr. Stuntman points out. "Namely, writers, producers, directors, cinematographers, costume designers, *et al* ... Only the composer, whose role is not visual but aural, could participate in the creation. Except for him or her, the

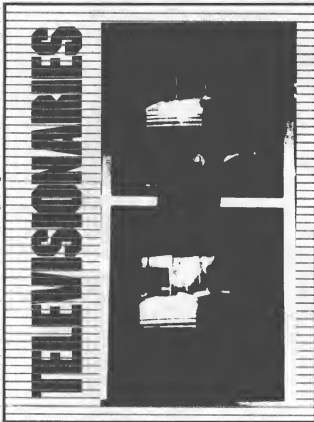
production would be the sole product of a single person, the *auteur*."

Dream critics. Wild. Pure Food for Thought would love it.

Sussman skipped to his speculative conclusions, worrying a bit now. Would it really play at P.F.T.?

Indeed, ESP-TV is only a hint of what may be in store for us. In Southern California there is a new cult that espouses a cosmology that conceives the nature of reality in terms of a cosmic television production, with the First Viewer, God, watching a picture of himself on a tv screen, and so on, *ad infinitum*, presumably all the way back to the beginning of video. Part of this doctrine holds that a day of judgment (preceding The New Season) is at hand, during which all life will be cancelled, except for certain elect producers, who will be left to start fresh with unlimited budgets. It should certainly be a season worth dressing for.

Sussman smiled. This was the big one. They would eat this up. It was apocalyptic information. He envisioned a huge raise, more screens. Leaving work, he made his way through the throngs of people in the street and went into a neighborhood bar. The restored vintage Zenith behind the bar was giving an antique amber image of a vintage commercial—anthropomorphic coffee beans hawking Folgers. Everyone laughed appreciatively. Sussman drank three Black Windows, and when he went to the men's room saw (hallucinated?) the urinal puck ashimmer with a car chase. (One could never be sure.) On his way home, in the car, he consulted the evening schedule. Two-hundred-and-forty-six channels. He liked the



generated television.

"I'd like to call the channel ESP-TV," Dr. Stuntman says. "It would operate by extrasensory projection of images programmed by the individual, making use of subconscious and dream material, or any kind of mental activity that goes on below the surface of our customary perceptions. A blank channel is necessary, and we're working on an electric-chemical means of materializing the thought processes. The possibilities, both artistic and therapeutic, are illimitable. I can envision a time when a patient could show a psychiatrist his dreams rather than describing them, or when anyone could view his subconscious thought or dreams as a refreshing alternative to soap operas and sitcoms."

one from Montevideo. Video Mountain. It showed some great game shows and terrific commercials featuring women wearing sunglasses with tv screen lenses on which subsidiary pictures were always in progress.

At home Sussman opened himself a beer, took a bound set of TV Guides from 1952, and settled back in his lounge chair to read vintage listings. After ten minutes or so he became aware that he was being watched. He checked the ceiling screen. On it was a carnal-looking woman with chic earrings, replicas of Monty Hall. "I like the way you turn pages," she whispered. "I've never done it. You must be into kink. Do you mind if I watch?"

"Be my guest," Sussman said. He rifled several pages audibly and heard

a protracted moan. "Got your picture," she murmured and blinked off.

For some reason, he couldn't feel the cameras. No. They were subtle. They had to be on.

Sussman got up and walked through the apartment, turning on all of the sets. The chaos was soothing. It was a little cool tonight so he went to the biggest screen in the house, the Spielberg in the living room, and stood before it, soaking up the warmth of its electronic glow, purring as he did so. A commercial distracted him. It was for animated tattoos, guaranteed to make you laugh during sexual relations. Only \$72.49 at Picture Queen. Sussman made a mental note.

He drifted back to the lounge chair and simul-viewed sixteen screens

until midnight, then went to bed and slept soundly until three o'clock when some music woke him. He lay there with his eyes still closed, straining to concentrate through his veiled consciousness. The music slowly defined itself—it was the national anthem. Sign off ... But the sets were off.

He got up and walked through the living room toward the sound of the music. It was coming from outside. He opened the window and stepped onto his tiny balcony, looking up at the sky where the theme seemed to be coming from. The night sky had been replaced by an enormous test pattern. Sussman had just a moment to marvel at the breathtaking symmetry of its cosmic design, and to wonder, desperately, if there would be reruns, before his show was cancelled. ■

PILLAGING POE

(continued from page 67)

the crisp river of words ran on ...

Despite her romantic fantasies about Poe, Loftus realized that he had played a big part in building up the walls of his own hell. No one twisted his arm and forced him to womanize, to drink even when he knew it knocked him on his ass, to flaunt rules and waste time mooning over his rotten luck. Poe had the brains, the looks, the charm and the connections to live a decent life, a respectable life.

But am I any better? Loftus asked herself. Does Wags have to ask twice when it comes to Location runs? As if I didn't know that this set-up wasn't quite kosher. Like I didn't know about the fines he pays after the release of each disc, about the scams and violations of the law ...

Loftus was almost certain that she had made eye contact with Poe, just for a second. He probably thought she was just a little girl. (Funny, how she always liked tall men.) To hell with the credits waiting, for her back in the parking lot at Time Vac—Wagnall kept petty cash in the trunk of his glidercar—this uncertain, wonderful moment was payment enough for Loftus. Something that she had read long ago came to her, a passage from an interview with a twentieth-century woman of music and poetry named Patti Smith. This woman wore around

her right wrist a bracelet engraved with the name *Rimbaud*. The fellow was a French poet, a fan (like Loftus) of Poe, and this Smith woman honored Rimbaud because he and she might have been close ... if only they could have met.

Smith never would have hurt Rimbaud, never would have ripped him off. She felt for him, cared for him, knew they could have been together—yet couldn't prove it. At least I am able to look at him, spend a moment in a broken fragment of time with him. I have my one chance, at least. Even though this time is forever barred to me again (damn Time Vac and its screwing Codes). I have it.

And it was then that the idea came to her. And with it the absolute which allowed Loftus to dare something almost unthinkable—stepping up on a wooden platform in a silly costume and suddenly finding herself face to face with ... what she had only wished before.

The reading was over. The poet rolled up his scroll of poems, bowed, and then stood graciously acknowledging the applause with regal nods of his broad-browed head.

Loftus clapped with the best of them, shouting "Bravo!" But she didn't leave with the rest of the audience a few minutes later.

First a dim shimmer, then solid, Loftus appeared on the oval Time Pad. Wagnall yanked her off the platform when she fully materialized.

"You get caught in the rain or something, Anabell? Where the fuck were you? One hour more and Mortan's replacement would've shown up and we'd all be behind bars ... Are

you listening, Loftus?"

She could see the bleeding spots on Wags' lips where he'd been chewing. Not caring what Mortan, the technician, thought, she began shucking off the Epochal Garment right in the middle of the computer-filled room. Wagnall grabbed her now bare arm and repeated, "Just where were you for seven hours? Nobody talks for that long."

"Some people do." She wriggled into her own soyknit shift, not bothering to brush it off, dropping the reticule on the floor before picking up her owl purse and starting for the door. Mortan threw everything but the reticule into the wall incinerator hole before returning to his console. Hurriedly, he erased the record of this Time Vacation. Wagnall shoved the little bag into his roomy jerkin pocket before following Loftus down the curving hall. He didn't notice that it was lighter than usual ... lighter by the weight of a micro-recorder, to be precise. Wagnall had to run to catch up with her.

"Anabell, I'm sorry, I—"

"Sokay, Wags. I was late. Let's drop it now." She kept walking, past Wagnall's glidercar to the slowly crawling sidewalk.

"Fine with me ... Loftus, don't you want your fee? Anabell? Hold it." He covered the distance between them quickly. "Don't tell me it was so good you don't want your credits." He gave her an ear-of-corn smile, yellow and rather soft.

Anabell Loftus pretended to think it over before replying, "I guess you really had to be there."

Then she turned and walked away. ■

A Show-by-Show Guide to Rod Serling's NIGHT GALLERY

by J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI and KATHRYN M. DRENNAN

Continuing our exclusive guide to the series that carried on the "Twilight Zone" tradition—complete with Rod Serling's opening narrations.

THE PHANTOM FARMHOUSE

Broadcast October 20, 1971
Teleplay by Halsted Welles, from the short story by Seabury Quinn
Directed by Jeannot Szwarc

Psychiatrist (David McCallum), Gideon (David Carradine), Mildred (Linda Marsh), Pierre (Ivor Francis), Sheriff (Ford Rainey), Betty (Trina Parks), Dr. Tom (Bill Quinn), Mrs. Squire (Gail Bonney), Mr. Squire (Martin Ashe), Mr. Grouch (Ray Ballard), Shepherd (Frank Arnold)

Good evening. We offer you an evening sojourn amongst the wild, the woolly, the unbelievable sometimes made believable—as our painting suggests. From this picture one wouldn't necessarily conjure up the story of love, but that's precisely what it tells about: the emotion as old as man. But the object of the emotion—this is not quite so familiar. Its title, "Phantom Farmhouse."

A patient from a psychiatric clinic in the countryside has been found torn to pieces near the ruins of a house burned down long ago. But another patient, Gideon, insists the house still stands and is occupied by a young blonde named Mildred.

The chief psychiatrist goes to investigate and finds the house—and Mildred. He falls in love the first moment he sees her, despite certain oddities: her unusually long index fingers



David McCallum (left) and Ford Rainey

and the dark red nails she and her parents wear.

Although he learns that these, like the pentagrams on Gideon's palms, are signs associated with werewolves and that three wolves—one with light, almost blond hair—are prowling the forest, the psychiatrist refuses to believe they are evil, even after his assistant Betty is found mauled to death.

Deeply in love, he returns to Mildred, who confesses that she loves him too, "more than life itself." Clearly distraught, she begs him to return

before sunrise and, over the three graves behind the house, to read burial prayers without stopping, no matter what he hears. He agrees, but on his way back to the clinic he is attacked by two wolves. Only the sudden intervention of the blond wolf saves him.

Ignoring the angry howl of wolves upon his return to the house, he finishes the prayers and faints. He is found later beside the ruins of a house burned down years before. He calls despairingly for Mildred, but no one answers.

SILENT SNOW, SECRET SNOW

Broadcast October 20, 1971
Teleplay by Gene Kearney, from the
short story by Conrad Aiken
Directed by Gene Kearney

Narrator (Orson Welles), Paul
(Radames Pera), Father (Lonny Chap-
man), Mother (Lisabeth Hush), Doctor
(Jason Wingreen), Mrs. Buel (Francis
Spanier)

On display this evening, a painting that brings to life a literary classic, from the pen of Conrad Aiken. Fragile, lovely, haunting. Its title: "Silent Snow, Secret Snow."

Paul, the narrator tells us, has a secret. One day, Paul lies in bed thinking he hears the postman's footsteps muffled by snow. Delicious snow everywhere. Though there is no snow on that or any of the following sunny days, for Paul the snow is there, growing deeper each morning. It's his secret. He thinks constantly of snow, growing distant from his parents and everyone else, retreating into that everywhere-whiteness. His new world is beautiful, irresistible, miraculous.

He is examined by a doctor, who finds nothing physically wrong. But the snow Paul sees has moved inside now, turning chandeliers into ice crystals, promising to tell him secrets "of cease and peace, and the long bright curve of space." It calls to him, commands him. Spurning his parents' attempts to reach him, he runs to his room—and everything is snow. "We will take the place of everything," the snow tells him. And with that he withdraws completely into his other world, turning inward, "the flower that becomes a little, cold seed." Then all is darkness—and snow.

A QUESTION OF FEAR

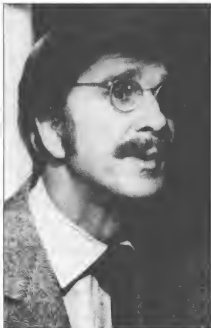
Broadcast October 27, 1971
Teleplay by Theodore J. Flicker, from
the short story by Bryan Lewis
Directed by Jack Laird

Colonel Denny Malloy (Leslie Nielsen), Dr. Mazi (Fritz Weaver), Al (Jack Bannon), Fred (Ivan Bonar), Walter (Owen Cunningham)

Good evening, and welcome to the Night Gallery. Now, if you'll just

follow me. Time again for your weekly excursion into the cultural: paintings, statuary, still lifes, collages, some abstracts—and some items in ice. That's not the technique—that, hopefully, is what we turn your blood into. A good way to begin the attempt: painting number one, about a man who spends a night in a haunted house. An unbeliever, if you will, who by dawn believes. The name of this painting is "A Question of Fear." The name of this place is the Night Gallery.

Colonel Denny Malloy claims to be incapable of fear. So Dr. Mazi, a man of whom he knows little, wagers ten thousand dollars that Malloy can't stay one night in a particular haunted



Leslie Nielsen

house without being frightened to death. Malloy takes the bet.

Malloy arrives at the house, gun in hand. Setting his thermos of coffee down, he explores the house. Strange manifestations begin: groans, weird laughter, dripping blood, apparitions of a man in some kind of uniform. And down in the cellar is a long, thick slime-trail.

Malloy returns to his thermos and drinks some coffee—only to be interrupted by the sound of a piano. Investigating, he sees the uniformed man rise and turn, his hands suddenly bursting into flame. But Malloy sees a cable running from the figure's heel. He cuts it, and the figure collapses, the fire going out. The house isn't

haunted—it's been rigged by Mazi to scare him. Laughing, sure of winning the bet, but strangely dizzy, Malloy retires to bed.

Next morning, Malloy finds a two-way camera hook-up downstairs. Via a tv monitor, Mazi asks him if he remembers a concert pianist who was a junior officer in the Italian army during the war. Malloy had captured and tortured him for information the poor man did not possess; then he poured gasoline on the pianist's hands and burned them to stumps. That man was Mazi's father.

During the years that Mazi had hunted Malloy, he had become a biochemist. He and a colleague developed a serum that dissolves bone and cartilage, turning a man into something very much like an earthworm, a fate that befell his colleague. And last night, Mazi drugged Malloy's coffee so that he could administer the serum to the brave colonel. "You will make a very brave slug," Mazi tells him.

Malloy refuses to believe the serum exists. Mazi tells him to look in the cellar. His unfortunate colleague is down there, all the proof Malloy needs. Malloy starts down, but sees more of the slime-trail he had found the night before. Malloy is convinced, but determined not to give Mazi the satisfaction of seeing him reduced to an earthworm. "You still lose," Malloy says. Raising his gun, Malloy kills himself.

"No, Colonel Malloy," says Mazi quietly. "You lose. There is nothing in the cellar."

THE DEVIL IS NOT MOCKED

Broadcast October 27, 1971
Teleplay by Gene Kearney, from the
short story by Manly Wade Wellman
Directed by Gene Kearney

General (Helmut Dantine), Count (Francis Lederer), Kranz (Hank Brandt), Hugo (Martin Kosleck), Radio Man (Gino Gottarelli), Machine Gunner (Mark de Vries)

Oscar Wilde said something to the effect that if there were not a Devil, we'd very likely have to invent him. He serves many a purpose. And this grim-visaged character here is proof of that rather bitter pudding, in a story that tells what happens when evil collides with evil. The painting is called, "The Devil Is Not Mocked."

NIGHT GALLERY

An old count tells his grandson what he did in the Great War . . .

The Nazis had surrounded his castle, certain that it was the headquarters for a secret partisan resistance group. But the Nazi general and his troops are welcomed by the well-dressed count and his servants. The general is served a lavish dinner. The count, however, eats nothing, claiming never to dine before midnight.

Confident of his power, the general accuses the count of leading the partisan group, a fact he will soon prove. Then midnight tolls and he hears the howling of wolves. His troops in the courtyard below are attacked by the servants now in wolf form—and when he turns, the count takes him by the throat. If it's of any consolation, says the count, this is the headquarters of the secret resistance, "and I am its proud leader, Count Dracula."

And that, the count tells his grandson while pointing proudly to a medal on the wall, is how he served his country.

MIDNIGHT NEVER ENDS

Broadcast November 3, 1971
Teleplay by Rod Serling
Directed by Jeannot Szwarc

Vincent Riley (Robert F. Lyons), Ruth (Susan Strasberg), Café Owner (Joseph Perry), Sheriff (Robert Karnes)

A most cordial welcome to this nocturnal arcade, featuring canvases that are sometimes a bit on the peculiar side—sometimes uncommon, sometimes a few frescoes of the freakish. Tonight's first selection: a painting suggesting solitude—or at least solemnity—as viewed during the midnight hour. It tells a tale of two young people caught inexorably in a recurring nightmare, with a finale on the jolting side. Our painting with the somewhat familiar face is called, "Midnight Never Ends." And this is the Night Gallery.

It's night, and a woman picks up a hitchhiking Marine. Instantly, both feel they've done this before. The hitchhiker, Vincent, knows the woman's name is Ruth, can predict what she'll say, and knows that their next stop is the Blue Danube Café, which will be closed.

They find the café, but it's open. Another mistake, Vincent says. Then the café closes. While a strange, loud but distant tapping is heard, Vincent talks the café owner into opening up again, all the while spotting more mistakes: a clock isn't on the wall, then it is. Then the sheriff is late making his entrance. Vincent is sure that someone is playing with their lives—someone who doesn't know his job.

None of them, Vincent says, existed before this moment. The sheriff and the café owner don't believe it, even though neither can remember anything about his own life. Vincent reaches into his pocket and finds a gun there. The sheriff fires. Vincent falls. And Ruth now knows what the tapping sound is . . .

In another room, a writer (who resembles Vincent) labors unsuccessfully over his latest story. He isn't sure why he gave the Marine a gun. His wife (Ruth's twin) asks if writers aren't supposed to know where the story is going. "Only the good ones," he says, trashing the pages and beginning again.

Night. Ruth—dressed differently, and in a different car—picks up a Marine. They look at one another and know that it's starting again.

BRENDA

Broadcast on November 3, 1971
Teleplay by Matthew Howard
(pseudonym for Douglas Heyes),
based on the short story by
Margaret St. Clair
Directed by Allen Reisner

Brenda (Laurie Prange), Richard Alden (Glenn Corbett), Flora Alden (Barbara Babcock), Jim Emsden (Robert Hogan), Elizabeth (Sue Taylor), Frances Anne (Pamelyn Ferdin), Thing In Pit (Fred Carson)

There's something rather remarkable in the scope of imagination peculiar to children. They project and dream and fantasize with beauty and simplicity and faith, in a manner that somehow eludes us as we grow older. This is Brenda. And Brenda has a playmate. It comes to her, in part, because of loneliness. And what I wish for you . . . is that you never get that lonely.

Brenda is summering with her parents on Moss Island. None of the other families like Brenda, a lonely,

difficult child, given to killing butterflies and stomping on other kids' sandcastles in a desperate bid for attention. When she stumbles across a Thing of moss and mud shambling lost through the forest, her reaction changes from fear to elation when she realizes she has found a companion. She traps it in a gravel pit and talks to the uncomprehending creature, trying to figure it out. It must be very old, she thinks—and yet is waiting to be born.

When Brenda can't find anyone with whom to share her discovery, she allows the Thing to escape from the pit and leaves her own front door open to accommodate it. Later that night, she is delighted to find her terrified parents confronting the Thing in their living room. She watches unseen as her father and the other men on the island use torches to drive it off.

Next morning, she returns to the gravel pit and finds a stone pyramid beneath which the Thing is buried, still alive. She has to leave the island, but swears to come back. A year later, she does, looking more mature. She goes to the stone pyramid, tears coming to her eyes, and tells the still living creature of her love for it. "We'll be born together, you and I!" she says, as the creature stirs beneath the stones.

THE DIARY

Broadcast November 10, 1971
Teleplay by Rod Serling
Directed by William Hale

Holly Schaeffer (Patty Duke), Carrie Crane (Virginia Mayo), Jeb Harlan (Robert Yuro), Dr. Mill (David Wayne), George the Watchman (James McCallion), Nurse (Lindsay Wagner), Receptionist (Floy Dean), Maid (Diana Chesney)

Good evening. A most cordial welcome to a display of canvases from what you might call the mausoleum school of art. Subject: a common enough item utilized by teenagers and tycoons—the daily journal, in which we notate the happenings of our day-to-day existence. But in this instance, a unique periodical that doesn't record what was, but rather, predicts what will be. Its title, "The Diary."

Vicious gossip reporter Holly Schaeffer airs a cruel story on tv

about fading star Carrie Crane. On New Year's Eve, the actress pays her a visit. Holly taunts her further, but Carrie responds with a gift: a blank diary, purchased at great price from an odd little shop. She then leaves and walks in front of a car, dying instantly. And Holly finds the diary is no longer blank—an entry for January 1, in Holly's own handwriting, describes Holly's disgust at Carrie's suicide.

Over the next few days, Holly insists the diary pages are filling themselves in, predicting events that come true. On the advice of her business manager and lover Jeb Harlan, she sees a psychiatrist, Dr. Mill.

Then the diary predicts that Jeb will die—and he does, despite her attempts to warn him. She blames herself. "How can I live with myself?" are the last words in the diary, and no entry has appeared for the next day. Holly, near hysteria, tells Dr. Mill this means she will commit suicide.

Holly has herself committed to a sanitarium. As the minutes tick down to midnight, she screams for a pen. The straitjacket and padded walls keep her from suicide, but can't prevent death from natural causes. She realizes now that she only has to write in the diary to save herself. Wearily, Dr. Mill gets her the pen—just as he has every night at midnight for the last five years.

A MATTER OF SEMANTICS

Broadcast November 10, 1971

Teleplay by Gene Kearney
Directed by Jack Laird

Dracula (Cesar Romero), Nurse (E. J. Peaker), Candy Striper (Monie Ellis)

A hospital at night. An elegant, capped figure enters the blood bank. He gives the necessary information: name, Count Dracula. The nurse is pleased to see someone of such high rank. It's such a worthy cause. He agrees heartily, eyeing the freezer. She mentions a one-pint limit. He's appalled, insisting on three. She smiles. This is the first time he's given, isn't it? He insists there's a misunderstanding. "This is a blood bank, isn't it? Well, then," he says, baring fangs, "I wish to apply for a loan."



John Carradine

BIG SURPRISE

Broadcast November 10, 1971

Teleplay by Richard Matheson, from his short story
Directed by Jeannot Szwarc

Mr. Hawkins (John Carradine), Chris (Vincent Van Patten), Jason (Marc Vahanian), Dan (Eric Chase)

Our painting reminds us that there's a strange fascination to digging holes alongside ancient oaks. You give the average man a shovel and an X on a map, and the fantasies come thick and fast: pirate gold, hidden Confederate treasure—and sometimes the unexpected. And sometimes the unexpected. Hence the title, "Big Surprise."

Three boys go by the Hawkins house again. Old Man Hawkins is, strangely, always there. No one ever sees him leave. He's a source of rumor and fear among the kids—so when he calls Chris over, the boy goes only

after being prodded. Hawkins says that if he wants a surprise, then he should go to an old oak in the field, walk ten paces, and dig four feet. There he'll find a great, big surprise.

Jason suspects Hawkins is pulling a trick on them. But Chris convinces them to dig anyway. After a while, Jason and Dan, exhausted, leave. Chris, determined not to share what he finds, keeps digging. He hits a wooden lid, long, like the entrance to a storm-cellar. He unlatches it—and it opens by itself. Out steps Old Man Hawkins, approaching the fear-paralyzed Chris.

"Surprise!" he says, and laughs.

PROFESSOR PEABODY'S LAST LECTURE

Broadcast November 10, 1971

Teleplay by Jack Laird
Directed by Jerrold Freedman

Professor Peabody (Carl Reiner), Lovecraft (Johnnie Collins III), Block (Richard Annis), Miss Heald (Louise Lawson), Derleth (Larry Watson)

Our final offering: a study in depth of a gentleman from academe, seen here at the lectern, delivering a most scholarly treatise. This particular class I don't think you'd want to cut. The painting's title, "Professor Peabody's Last Lecture."

Professor Peabody, lecturing on ancient pagan religious cults, disregards student Derleth's idea that such beliefs serve a legitimate purpose. He mocks them severely—especially the religion discussed today: the cult of the Old Ones. He lists them all, speaking names that, Derleth notes, will invoke punishment onto the speaker. Peabody scoffs more loudly, competing with the sudden rise of thunder and wind.

He next tackles "The Necronomicon," which he reads despite student Lovecraft's warning that it will bring dire consequences. Reading as the storm grows, he names the Old Ones who will someday return—then in a sudden blast of thunder and lightning, Peabody is transformed into a strange, deformed being who closes the book and faces front. "Now, if there are no further questions . . ."

Will the Real Martian Please Stand Up

by ROD SERLING

The original television script first aired on CBS-TV May 26, 1961

CAST

Ross	John Hoyt
Haley	Barney Phillips
Avery	Jack Elam
Trooper Dan Perry	Morgan Jones
Trooper Bill Padgett	John Archer
Olmsted	Bill Kendis
Ethel McConnell	Jean Willes
Peter Kramer	Bill Erwin
Rose Kramer	Gertrude Flynn
George Prince	Ron Kipling
Connie Prince	Jill Ellis

ACT ONE

FADE ON:

1. STANDARD ROAD OPENING

With vehicle smashing into letters, propulsion into starry night, then pan down to opening shot of play.

2. EXTERIOR HIGHWAY NIGHT

A light snow falls.

3. MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT STATE POLICE CAR

Padgett, a State Trooper, manipulates a spotlight standing outside the car.

4. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD AN ICY POND

At the bottom of a culvert, the spotlight playing back and forth over it. What it reveals is a sea of snow.

5. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD PADGETT

By the spot. He flicks off the light, then awaits the lumbering figure of his partner, Perry, who climbs up the culvert toward him.

PADGETT

See anything?

6. TWO SHOT THE TWO MEN PERRY

Tops of some trees have been knocked off. Looks like something hit the pond. Whatever it is, it's under the ice till next spring.

PADGETT

Meteor or something.

(he pauses as he looks toward the car)

I'd better report in. Lady who phoned in said something about calling out the National Guard.

Padgett laughs, reaches through the window of the car, takes out a microphone.

PADGETT

This is 1183A ... 1183A reporting a checkout.

VOICE

(on car radio)

Go ahead.

PADGETT

Checking out a report on an unidentified flying object. Supposed to have landed in the area of Hook's Landing. Appears something did clip off some trees and come down, but she's down in the ice of Tracy's Pond now and we can't see her.

(he stops abruptly, squints out toward the highway beyond the car)

PERRY

(calls out)

Bill!

PADGETT

(back on the mike)

Hold up a second—

PERRY

There are foot prints up here. They came from the pond, and—looks like they got out of whatever landed.

7. PAN SHOT ACROSS THE HIGHWAY

Following a trail of prints in the snow and broken foliage in a direct line to a small diner across the highway and perhaps a hundred yards to the right.

PADGETT

(back on the mike)

There appears to be some evidence that—

(he stops, looks a little sheepish)

Well, we'll phone you back.

VOICE

(on the car radio)

What's it all about?

PADGETT

Well, I don't know yet.

VOICE

(on the car radio)

How's that?

PADGETT

We'll report back in a little bit.

VOICE

(on the car radio)

All right, Padgett. But there's some talk of the bridge going out up there. When you can, you better make sure she's posted and blocked off. Enough ice jammed against it to cool the Congo.

PADGETT

Roger and out.

He replaces the radio mike through the window, then opens the car door and rolls up the window.

8. MOVING SHOT PADGETT

As he walks beyond the car to the highway where Perry stands.

PERRY

No question about it. Something left that pond and went over to the diner. The two men look across the highway toward the diner.

9. LONG SHOT FOLLOWING THEIR LOOK

Of the diner and a bus parked outside.

10. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD THE TWO MEN

PADGETT

(with a grin)

Looks like a bus in front of the diner. Don't suppose it came out of the pond, do you?

PERRY

(seriously)

Those aren't wheel tracks and no bus ever climbed out of that pond. (he looks down toward the pavement.)

PADGETT

Let's leave the car and follow the tracks. I want to be sure they lead to the diner.

11. LONG ANGLE SHOT THE TWO MEN

As they walk across the highway toward the diner.

12. CLOSER SHOT THE DOOR TO THE DINER

As the two troopers enter. The camera pans over for a shot of Serling standing close to the door.

SERLING

Wintery February night ... the present. Order of events—a phone call from a frightened woman notating the arrival of an unidentified flying object. Then the check-out you've just witnessed with two state troopers verifying the event, but with nothing more enlightening to add beyond evidence of some tracks leading across the highway to a diner. You've heard of trying

to find a needle in a haystack? Well, stay with us now—and you'll be part of an investigating team whose mission is not to find that proverbial needle. No, their task is even harder. They've got to find a Martian in a diner. And in just a moment ... you'll search with them because you've just landed ... in the Twilight Zone.

FADE TO BLACK:

OPENING BILLBOARD FIRST COMMERCIAL

FADE ON:

13. EXTERIOR DINER NIGHT

The snow continues to cascade down. Camera moves in so that it's shooting through the window of the diner on the two state troopers as they enter.

CUT TO:

14. INTERIOR DINER NIGHT

Seven people sit around the booths and the counter, in addition to the bus driver, Olmsted, and Haley, the lunch-counter owner. Olmsted is a nondescript thin man in a leather jacket with a bus driver's cap. Haley, the owner, is a big, hulking, florid-faced man with a balding dome and a genial look; he is wearing a heavy, long-sleeved sweater.

15. PAN SHOT AROUND THE ROOM

Taking in shots of the various people. First Haley, the owner, and Olmsted, the driver. Then a young couple sitting in the corner, George and Connie Prince. In two booths, each sitting alone, are a middle-aged man named Ross with a sour look and an attractive blonde with a look of show biz, named Ethel McConnell. Then a couple in their thirties. They are Peter and Rose Kramer. The last person, sitting all by himself at the far end of the room, is a tight-lipped old man named Avery. Without exception they look cold, tired and wet. Rain coats are hung up on hooks, and Haley is in the process of cheerfully pouring out coffee and taking orders for sandwiches.

CUT TO:

16. TWO SHOT THE TROOPERS

As they look around the room, then stand at the end of the counter. Perry motions to Haley who smiles and waddles over to them along the back of the counter.

Haley

Troubled?

Perry

Whose bus is that?

OLMSTED

(sitting closest to them, puts his coffee mug down)

That's mine, Officer. What's the problem?

PERRY

The bridge up ahead has been declared temporarily impassable. Ice flows tacked up against it. Another pound of weight and it may be driftwood.

OLMSTED

(scratches his jaw)

That's rough. I can't turn around and go back. There's a slide up there at the turn off. It's blocked the whole road.

HALEY

Looks like you're kind of marooned.



PERRY

Till morning anyway.

ROSS

(the middle-aged man)

Till morning?

(he slams the flat of his hand down on the table top)

I've got to be in Boston at nine a.m.

OLMSTED

(grins)

Then you better start walkin', mister. That bus is gonna stay parked out there until they fix the bridge. Either that or you better have them drop some snow shoes.

GEORGE PRINCE

(one of the young couple)

Any assurance that the bridge will be open by morning?

PERRY

None whatsoever. So it appears you better all get comfortable and get some hot food in you.

ROSS

(petulantly)

Oh that's great! That's really swell! Get comfortable and get some hot food in yourselves! That's precious little consolation for my missing my meeting in Boston.

(then to the bus driver, angrily)

That's quite a bus line you work for. They don't care much about a schedule, do they?

OLMSTED

I wouldn't be too hard on them, mister. They don't control the snowfall and the bridges and the sides of hills that decide to come down. That's pretty much out of their hands.

ROSS

(mumbling to himself)

Even so they have a responsibility to their passengers.

17. CLOSE SHOT PERRY

As he looks from face to face then exchanges a look with Padgett, who comes into the frame alongside of him.

PERRY

(in a low voice)

What do you think?

PADGETT

They're all off the bus, aren't they?

18. GROUP SHOT

As Haley looks from one to the other.

HALEY

What's the trouble? You looking for somebody?

PADGETT

(to Olmsted, the driver)

You got a passenger manifest?

OLMSTED

(laughs)

A passenger manifest? What do you think I got parked out there—a 707? Mister, that's a fourteen-year-old bus and business is lousy. My boss would run rum across the border if there was profit in it.

(he shakes his head)

I don't ask the passengers' names. We just kiss them softly on the cheek and help them in. We're that glad to have them with or without names.

PERRY

You know how many you had?

OLMSTED

Six. Unless one of them fell out of a window when we hit a bump. I picked up six and I'm supposed to deliver six.

19. CLOSE SHOT PADGETT

As his eyes dart around the counter and his lips soundlessly count.

20. DIFFERENT ANGLE

He and Perry as Padgett turns to him, a

little bewilderedly, with just the suggestion of a tension building.

PADGETT

Nobody fell out ... somebody must have jumped in. We got seven here now.

21. CLOSE SHOT OLMSTED

As he looks bewilderedly around, counting with a darting finger.

OLMSTED

That's funny. I know I had only six people.

22. GROUP SHOT AT COUNTER

PADGETT

Anybody in here before the bus stopped?

HALEY

Nope. I haven't served anybody since eleven this morning. I figured this whole bunch got off the bus.

OLMSTED

They did. There was nobody in here when we came.

PERRY

Then how do you account for seven people?

OLMSTED

(scratches his head)

That one beats me. One of them didn't get off the bus.

PERRY

(to the people in the diner collectively)

Which one of you people wasn't on the bus?

23. FULL SHOT THE ROOM

As the customers look at one another a little discomfited.

ROSS

We were all on the bus. What kind of interrogation is this? If we're going to be grilled—I'd like very much to secure a lawyer.

24. CLOSE SHOT AVERY

The old man, as he cackles toothlessly.

AVERY

Oh, that's a good one! First he wants snowshoes—then a lawyer!

25. GROUP SHOT

ROSS

(whirls around to him angrily)

I didn't see you on the bus.

AVERY

Now that's quite funny. Because I didn't see you either. So that makes one of us a liar, don't it?

ROSS

(huffily, turning away)

This is preposterous.

(then looking up)

What difference does it make who was

on the bus and who wasn't? And whether there were six or seven or a hundred and twenty? Are we going to get some food or aren't we? Is this a diner or the Gestapo Headquarters?

HALEY

(softly)

Easy, mister.

(then to Perry and Padgett)

What's it all about?

**26. CLOSE TWO SHOT
PERRY AND PADGETT**

As they exchange a look. Padgett nods barely perceptibly.

PERRY

(taking the cue, to Haley)

You hear anything flying over here tonight?

HALEY

(perplexed)

Flying over here?

(he shakes his head)

No. I didn't hear anything.

PERRY

There was a call about two hours ago. Some woman said she heard something fly over and then went down.

HALEY

Come down? From where?

PADGETT

(motions with a thumb toward the ceiling)

From up there. Unidentified flying object.

HALEY

(shakes his head, with a chuckle)

Unidentified flying object? Nothing come down from up there except snow. That's all I've seen for the past fourteen hours—snow. Where'd she say it came down?

PERRY

Close to here.

PADGETT

Something *did* land in Tracy's Pond, and it left a lot of broken branches before it hit. We found tracks leading away from it.

**27. PAN SHOT AROUND
THE ROOM**

The faces of the people who sit in the diner. They look expectant and now a little worried.

HALEY

To where?

28. CLOSE SHOT PADGETT

As he looks around the room.

PADGETT

To here.

29. CLOSE SHOT HALEY

HALEY

Here? You mean something landed in Tracy's Pond—then came in here? Well, that's crazy. Nothing's come in here since eleven o'clock this morning. Nothing except—
He stops abruptly and looks at Olmsted.

30. CLOSE SHOT OLMSTED

OLMSTED

Except me and my bus load. Me and six people.

(he again turns on his stool and surveys the room)

But I only had six passengers. There's seven people in here.

(then hurriedly turning to the troopers) Well, that means ... that means that one person in here—

31. GROUP SHOT

CONNIE PRINCE

(one of the young couple

half rises on the counter stool, with a stifled cry)

I don't like this!

GEORGE

(her husband takes her arm reassuringly)

Easy, honey. Easy.

PETER KRAMER

(one of the older couple)

Let me get this straight.

(To Padgett and Perry)

You're trying to tell us that there's one person in here who landed in some kind of a saucer or something and then came in here?

ETHEL MCCONNELL

(the show girl)

Came in here with us?

ROSS

But that's not possible. We'd have seen him.

PETER

Not necessarily. It's snowing and dark, and we climbed out of that bus with our eyes closed to get out of the snow. Anyone could have come in with us and we wouldn't have noticed.

PADGETT

But you were all together on the bus. You'd know who the other passengers were.

OLMSTED

That doesn't cut ice. They loaded up in the snow down at Hook's Landing. To tell you the truth, I don't remember who got on. All I know is there were six.

32. CLOSE SHOT AVERY

The old man, who cackles again.

AVERY

Just like a real science fiction story,

that's what she is. She's like a Ray Bradbury. Six humans and one monster from outer space.

(then leering at Ross)
You wouldn't happen to have an eye in the back of your head, would you?

ROSS
(bridling)

I find you offensive, do you know that?

GEORGE
(hugging his wife and in a strange way relieved, though trying to make light of it)
And us too. My wife and I—we're in the clear.

33. CLOSE SHOT CONNIE
Who suddenly stares at her husband.

picking up invisible clues from everybody else. This is nonsense—

ROSE

Well it *is* nonsense if a husband and wife suddenly start to wonder whether the husband really is the husband or the wife is really—

She stops, staring at her husband, tilts her head as if looking through a



ETHEL

(to the troopers)

Well, what do you do now?

PADGETT

(with a wry grin)

Look, lady—this isn't exactly par for our courses either. We go off on an awful lot of nutty assignments—but this one—

He shakes his head back and forth.

ETHEL

Well, I know how you begin. You pair off the couples. Since it's just one person who doesn't belong here—that eliminates the couples.

PETER

(with an exaggerated sigh of relief)

Phew. We're exonerated.

(he kisses his wife joyfully)

Cross off us. We're two of the humans.

**34. TWO SHOT
GEORGE AND CONNIE**

GEORGE

What's the matter?

CONNIE

(in an odd voice)

I could have sworn—

GEORGE

Sworn what?

CONNIE

That you had a mole on your chin.

GEORGE

A mole on my chin? Connie—I've never had a mole on my chin.

The two of them stare at one another somewhat aghast as the camera pans over to Peter and Rose Kramer.

PETER

(shakes his head disgusted)

I can tell you what's happening now! We're all going to get so panicky that everybody and his brother will start

microscope.

PETER

Now wait a minute!

(he points a finger at her)

I think twenty-three years is long enough for a woman to know who she's married to. So I'll thank you to stop looking at me as if I had just put on this face as part of a costume—

**35. DIFFERENT ANGLE
THE ROOM
FAVORING AVERY**

(rubbing his hands gleefully)

Oh, this is rich! I love this! Better'n a horror movie. He don't know who she is. She don't know who he is.

(pointing to Ethel)

We don't know who she is. And that lemon sucker over there—

(he points to Ross)

—he's the most suspicious of the bunch.

36. CLOSE SHOT PERRY

Who is not smiling at all.

PERRY

(to Haley)

You got a back door to this place?

37. GROUP SHOT AT COUNTER

HALEY

(a little concerned)

Why sure. Why?

PERRY

How does she look?

HALEY

(after a pause, letting the

question sink in)

Night latch and key. Why?

PERRY

You got the key?

HALEY

Sure.

He reaches in his pocket.

PADGETT

Go back there and lock it.

HALEY

It's always locked. But if that certain somebody is really from outer space—they'll just go through the wall anyway.

AVERY

(cackling)

Check 'em for wings! Check 'em all for wings. Look under their coats.

PADGETT

(looks across at the old man)

You got identification, Grampa?

AVERY

(winks devilishly)

Left it down there in the Pond in my space ship.

PERRY

Who won the National League pennant last year?

ROSS

(spluttering)

What is this anyway—some prolonged practical joke?

AVERY

(waves him quiet)

I understand. I get it. Pittsburgh Pirates won it, mister, and took four out of seven from the Yankees.

(then winking toward the

others and pointing toward

the troopers)

Sharp boys. Real sharp boys. They don't figure a Martian would know anything about the Great American Pastime.

38. CLOSE SHOT PERRY

As his eyes move around the room again.

He stops when he looks at Ethel.

39. CLOSE SHOT ETHEL

As she turns her eyes away and drops the cup of coffee in her hand.

40. DIFFERENT ANGLE PERRY

As he walks up to her.

PERRY

You got identification, miss?

ETHEL

(a little flustered)

No, I don't. As a matter of fact ... I left my wallet ... I left my wallet with my suitcase. It was shipped on ahead.

PERRY

What's your name, miss?

ETHEL

Ethel McConnell. I'm a professional dancer.

AVERY

With how many legs? How many legs?

ETHEL

(whirls around to him)

I'm gonna belt you, Grampa.

OLMSTED

(to Perry)

She was on the bus.

PERRY

How do you know?

OLMSTED

She's the only one I noticed.

ETHEL

Thank you.

AVERY

But who noticed him?

(triumphant)

And how do we know you're the same fellow who was *drivin'* the bus? There ain't nobody been exonerated yet—and that's for sure!

ROSS

Look—let's cut this farce right now. We'll show all of our identification and put an end to it for good and all. This whole thing is ridiculous.

PETER

Then how do you explain the extra person in here?

ROSS

Very simply. The driver's mistaken. Seven people got on the bus and he thought there were only six.

PADGETT

(turning to Olmsted)

Is that possible?

OLMSTED

(shakes his head)

Not a chance in the world. I counted heads just before we took off. There were six people.

At this given moment the juke box at the far end of the room suddenly goes on.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

41. THE PEOPLE

As they jerk their heads up and stare at it.

CUT TO:

42. SHOT OF THE JUKE BOX

As it plays a few bars then suddenly stops. The lights go out.

43. CLOSE SHOT HALEY

As he gazes bug-eyed at it, then slowly turns toward the troopers.

HALEY

What ... what caused that?

44. GROUP SHOT

CONNIE

What if it ... what if it were invisible?

What if there was something in here from that pond ... but we couldn't see it?

45. CLOSE SHOT PERRY

As he looks at Padgett.

46. CLOSE SHOT PADGETT

As he slowly shakes his head.

47. DIFFERENT ANGLE

PADGETT

As he walks to the door and leans with his back against it. He slowly reaches down and unsnaps his gun holster.

PADGETT

We may get a big laugh out of all this in the morning.

(his eyes travel around the room)

But for the time being, folks ... everybody stay right where they are.

48. PAN SHOT AROUND THE

FACES OF THE PEOPLE

As they look at one another.

FADE TO BLACK:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE ON:

49. INTERIOR DINER NIGHT

PAN SHOT ACROSS

THE ROOM

The various people have shifted positions. Connie and George, the young couple, have moved to a booth. She's asleep, leaning against him. Ethel McConnell is stretched out in another booth, sound asleep. The older couple remain at the counter drinking coffee. Ross stands looking out the door. Avery, the old man, remains in his place like a wise old owl blinking down on the whole scene from a vantage point of humorous, condescending wisdom. Haley comes out from the kitchen, nudges Olmsted who's leaning over the counter, head in hands.



HALEY

Where'd the troopers go?

OLMSTED

(looks up sleepy-eyed)

Just stepped outside. Snow seems to be letting up.

(he rubs his eyes then looks

across at the juke box,

waggles a finger at it)

Say, Haley—you didn't pull that gag, did you? I mean the business about the juke box startin' up like that?

HALEY

Not me. Look, buddy, I'm strictly short orders and pay taxes. I don't know anything about science fiction. A juke box is a juke box. And if the blamed thing feels like startin' up on its own—you better go check with an electrical engineer.

They turn when they hear Avery, the old man, cackling at the far end of the room.

50. DIFFERENT ANGLE AVERY

As he rises and walks across over to the juke box, winks at them and turns on the juke box.

AVERY

Take me to your leader.

Then he throws back his head, convulsing with laughter. The front door opens and the two troopers reenter.

HALEY

Snow's lettin' up, isn't it?

PERRY

Quite a bit. We took a look at the bridge.

PADGETT

She seems to be holding pretty well.

OLMSTED

I know that bridge. And what's more, I don't trust it.

ROSS

(leaving his booth)

Well, thank goodness it's not your judgment we have to concern ourselves with. If that bridge gets a bill of health—you're going to drive that bus across.

OLMSTED

(angrily)

Mister, you may be a hot shot in Boston, Mass.—but in matters of the bridges and busses, I got seniority. And I tell you that bridge is so old that—

He stops abruptly, staring up toward the lights on the ceiling.

51. CLOSE SHOT THE LIGHTS

As they dim.

52. LONG SHOT THE ROOM

As people stare, conscious of something happening.

ETHEL

What was that? Why did the lights dim like that?

HALEY

We may be losing power.

53. CLOSE SHOT THE JUKE BOX

As once again it starts to play. It goes a few bars then clicks off.

54. GROUP SHOT

HALEY

(shakes his head, wipes his forehead) This is weird. This is just plain weird.

ETHEL

I wish whoever it was would play his cards right now!

CONNIE

(her voice shaking)

Why don't they do something? What's the point of us all staying cooped up

in here and—

PERRY

(interrupting)

This point is, miss, that we're all kids in a closet here. Nobody understands what's going on, but it happens to be a fact that something is going on. And if that was some kind of saucer that landed in the pond—and if he did come in here, I think it would be a real healthy idea if we pinpointed that particular somebody and kept him from leaving.

HALEY

That makes sense. But I think that girl might have the right idea. Maybe whoever it is is invisible. Maybe he's just playing around, cat and mouse.

ROSS

That's utter nonsense—

PETER

It's as good an explanation as any I've heard. But what if the ... if the "thing" doesn't show itself? Do we just sit here holding our breaths?

AVERY

Now if somebody was to ask me—

ROSS

(lighting into him)

Nobody did ask you and no one will.

ETHEL

Why don't you leave the old man alone—

ROSS

(whirls around to her)

And who invited you into this?

ETHEL

(rising, shouting at him)

I didn't realize we were waiting for invitations. But you've got this big thing about bossing everybody around—

PETER

(out-shouting them both)

Look, it's bad enough having to sit here—

At this moment the camera pans around the room taking in first a shot of the lights dimming, then the juke box lights going on, then a sugar bowl crackling all by itself on the counter, winding up with the sound of a low hum that permeates the room. Connie screams and flings herself into George's arms. Rose Kramer grabs her husband and looks around fearfully. Haley ducks under the counter. The two troopers go for their guns, and at the end of the chronology of events, everything goes back to normal, and the whole scene is punctuated by the phone ringing.

55. CLOSE SHOT THE PHONE

As it continues to ring.

**56. CLOSE SHOT
THE COUNTER**

As Haley very slowly peeks over the top of it, looks questioningly at the troopers.

PERRY

I'll take it.

57. TRACK WITH HIM

As he goes over to the phone on the wall, picks it up.

PERRY

Yeah? What's that? It's okay? All right, fine. Thank you.

(he replaces the receiver,
turns to Padgett)

The bridge is okay.

**58. PAN AROUND THE FACES
OF THE PEOPLE**

Winding up on Ross.

ROSS

Well it's about time.

(he reaches for his raincoat)

Shall we go?

59. TWO SHOT

PADGETT AND PERRY

PADGETT

What about it?

PERRY

(shakes his head)

We can't hold them.

60. CLOSE SHOT AVERY

Who waggles a finger in Perry's face.

AVERY

You're making a big mistake, officer. A big mistake. You're letting a monster out.

PERRY

(smiles tiredly)

That may well be, Pop. That may well be. But I can't hold people on suspicion of being a monster.

(he turns toward the bus driver)

Okay. You can roll 'em any time.

OLMSTED

(rises)

Okay, folks. Let's go.

(then turning to Perry)

They're sure about the bridge? I've never liked that sucker. She swings in the wind and she's not a suspension.

PERRY

That was one of the county engineers. She's been checked out and declared passable. We'll go on ahead of you and go across first.

HALEY

You can pay your checks over here, ladies and gentlemen. Godspeed, safe trip.

(then exhaling)

And come back and see us.

(then looking from face to face)

That is ... all but one of you.

61. DIFFERENT ANGLE

As the people cue up to pay their checks at the cash register.

DISSOLVE TO:

62. INTERIOR DINER NIGHT

Haley is just finished mopping the floor. He comes up close to the juke box and stares at it for a long moment; he touches it a little tentatively and then shakes his head, apparently mystified. He then carries the mop and bucket behind the counter.

63. REVERSE ANGLE

LOOKING TOWARD DOOR

As it opens and Ross enters.

64. CLOSE SHOT HALEY

His back is to him. He hears the footsteps, but when he speaks he still doesn't turn around.

HALEY

Something for you?

ROSS'S VOICE

Coffee, please, black.

HALEY

(still not turning around,
pours coffee out of the
big metal urn)

One cup of coffee, black.

65. DIFFERENT ANGLE HALEY

As he turns with the coffee cup in hand, his eyes suddenly look wide, seeing who it is.

66. CLOSE SHOT THE FLOOR

As the coffee cup smashes onto it.

67. TWO SHOT THE TWO MEN

ROSS

Didn't burn yourself, did you?

68. CLOSE SHOT HALEY

Who just stares at him for a long, incredulous moment.

HALEY

No ... no ... I'm all right.

(he wets his lips)

What about—what I mean is—didn't you go out on the bus—

69. CLOSE SHOT ROSS

ROSS

(picking up the menu
and studying it)

Oh, I did indeed. Yes, I went on the bus. You know something? That bridge wasn't safe. It collapsed. State trooper's car ... bus ...

(he makes a gesture
with his hand)

Kaplunk. He shot into the water!
(he shakes his head,
then clucks)

Terrible scene. Nobody got out ... except me.

70. TWO SHOT

FAVORING HALEY

As he leans on the counter, staring at Ross.

HALEY

Except ... you?

ROSS

(nods)

Except me.

(he sighs)

Lucky, I guess, huh?

HALEY

(still incredulous)

Very lucky.

(he starts, double takes)

But ... but...?

ROSS

But what?

HALEY

You're not even wet.

ROSS

Wet? What's wet?

HALEY

What do you mean, what's wet? You landed in the river, but your clothes are all dry.

ROSS

(chuckles)

An illusion is all. Just an illusion.

(he points to the juke box)

Like that thing playing. That's an illusion.

71. CLOSE SHOT JUKE BOX

As it lights up, plays for one loud instant, then shuts off.

72. CLOSE SHOT ROSS

As he turns toward the phone.

ROSS

Or that telephone ringing.

73. CLOSE SHOT THE PHONE

As it rings. Haley comes into the scene, picks it up.

HALEY

Yes?

ROSS'S VOICE

(on the phone)

See? Just an illusion. A parlor trick, is all.

74. CLOSE SHOT HALEY

As he slams the phone down, whirls around, white-faced, toward Ross.

HALEY

What ... what's going on? What are you—some kind of magician?

75. CLOSE SHOT ROSS

Who smiles insouciantly.

ROSS

Me?

(he purses his lips
and shakes his head)

Hardly.

There's a pause as he pats his pockets, takes out a pack of cigarettes. With one hand he puts a cigarette in his mouth, with the other he lights a lighter, and in the process, as the camera moves in for a closer shot, his third hand comes out from his belt buckle, picks up the menu.

76. CLOSE SHOT HALEY

As he stares directly at Ross, but at this moment we see neither fear nor consternation. It is simply a rather matter-of-fact, interested look.

77. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING AT ROSS ROSS

(looks up and smiles)

Before you faint dead away, I might as well tell you. The name really isn't Ross. And I wasn't really going to Boston.

(he takes a long, deep
drag on his cigarette)

Actually I've been sent down as an advance scout.

(he looks at the smoke
he's exhaled)

These ... what do they call them ... cigarettes—taste wonderful. We don't have a thing like this on Mars.

(then he smiles)

That, incidentally, is where I'm from. We're beginning to colonize and my friends who'll be arriving shortly ... I think, they'll like it here. Lovely area. It's so homey ... and so off the beaten track. Just the place to start a colony. Don't you agree, Mr. Haley?

78. DIFFERENT ANGLE ROSS

As, smiling, he walks over to the juke box.

ROSS

While we're waiting ... how about a little ... what you call music?

The camera pans slowly back over to Haley.

HALEY

I don't mind. I have to do a little waiting myself. You see, Mr. Ross—
(he smiles beneficently)

My name isn't Haley. I do agree that this is an exceptional place to colonize. We folks from Venus had the same idea ... only we got it several years ago. But I think I ought to tell you now that your friends aren't coming. They've been intercepted. There is a colony arriving, but it's from Venus. If you're still alive ... you'll see how we differ!

79. CLOSE SHOT HALEY

As he very slowly reaches up and removes his chef's cap, revealing an extra eye over the two we've seen. Then he leans over.

HALEY

I agree about ... what they call ... music. Why don't you play some?

The camera pans over for a shot of Ross who gazes at him, then a pan over to the juke box that starts to play, then a pan back over to Haley who smiles, leaning against the counter. We then start a slow dolly away to the door and then outside. Over this we hear Serling's voice in narration.

SERLING'S VOICE

Incident on small island, to be believed or disbelieved ... depending on

your frame of reference, your imagination, and whether or not you're from Missouri. But no matter the degree of your skepticism—if a sour-faced dandy named Ross who looks like a stocks and bonds salesman, or a big, good-natured counter-man who handles a spatula as if he'd been born with one in his mouth—if either of these two entities walk onto your premises—you better hold his hands, all three of them—or check the color of his eyes—all three of them. The gentleman in question might try to pull you into ... The Twilight Zone.

The camera pans away from the diner and then up from the highway and the dark marshes into the sky.

FADE TO BLACK: ■

THE END



ILLUSTRATION BY KIM ZIMMERMAN

Best bites and limpest epics: a manic romp through '85.

by GAHAN WILSON

I'd better warn you: this particular gathering of reviews will probably read like one of those snappy Broadway columns in Cagney movies of the thirties, one of those things packed with jaunty one-liners and snappy insights floating airily over fleeting shots of a passing parade. The reason is the same one that prompted Winchell to develop his machine-gun patter: I've just got too much material to cover in anything like a civilized fashion. This summer the Hollywood biggies all tried to cram their large selves through our particular door because, dear reader and fantasy lover, we are IN!

I don't know about you, but personally it feels kind of nice. I mean, I've spent years being an oddball sharing oddball likings with a small group of weirdos, and it feels great to be in the mainstream now with my favorite entertainment flooding over me. Of course, if it goes on long enough—all this popularity of monsters and the grotesque—my basic anti-social instincts may reassert themselves, and I'll take up a more general taste for, say, baseball with its sneaky, big-buck cokeheads fighting regular urine tests. They might turn out to be just my kind of guys.

So let's get going. We might as well start out with the good stuff, and why not with something that was even successful to boot, like **Fright Night**?

Fright Night is a very well constructed comedy/fantasy that takes its vampire premise seriously. Even the pickiest vampire fans among you will find nothing to carp about in the film's handling of the props and protocols associated with the undead.

Set in a nicely suggested Anytown, its hero (William Ragsdale) is an upstanding teenager whose only flaw seems to be a little too much affection for Hammer- and Corman-esque horror movies, particularly those which, like this one, star Roddy McDowall playing a Peter Cushing-sized Vincent Price who has been reduced to hosting a local midnight show of spooker reruns called *Fright Night*. It also features Amanda Bearse, nicely cast as Ragsdale's steady, who is understandably miffed when her long-delayed offer of sex goes unnoticed because Ragsdale is more involved in the ecstasy of see-



Photo copyright © 1985 Columbia Pictures, Inc.

William Ragsdale fingering the traditional tools of defense.

ing two men carrying a coffin into the basement of the empty house next door.

A murdered girl or two, and even stranger doings in the house next door—now rented by a mysterious fellow of somewhat nasty charm (Chris Sarandon) and his meanmannered roommate (Jonathan Stark)—convince our hero that Sarandon is a full-fledged, honest-to-God vampire, just like in the movies.

The rest of the film is an amusing fooling around with Ragsdale's predicament: Will he get the vampire, or will the vampire get him? But it is essentially McDowall's show. He has all sorts of fun camping up the Price/Cushing character (who is provided with a swell run-down apartment, stuffed full of horrible masks and signed movie posters from the glory days). And as might be expected, he extracts the maximum from the horror show host's collapsings and pullings-together when he finds himself actually having to deal with the real thing. He is also well supported by Ragsdale and Bearse, as well as by Stephen Geoffreys playing an unhappy adolescent with

morbid fantasies and Dorothy Fielding as Ragsdale's confused but well-meaning mother. The audience had a fine time with *Fright Night*, congratulating one another on their good choice as they ambled contentedly out, and so did I, and so, I think, will you.

The next good movie was, unfortunately, not at all successful, at least not here in the U. S. of A. It did quite well overseas, I gather, but our lot didn't seem to care for it; it snuck in and out of a tiny selection of neighborhood theaters and disappeared. You may be able to locate a tape of it somewhere, or nag a rerun theater into doublebilling it with something commercially feasible. It's worth a shot. **The Company of Wolves** is a sensitive, perceptive rendering in fable of a young girl's coming to sexual maturity and her attempt to arrive at some sort of terms with the strange problems posed by males.

Unfortunately, for commercial motives, it chose to tell this fable in images usually employed by horror movies—horrendous makeup, wild special effects, and ghastly se-



awful those foibles may be. The basic myth played with is "Little Red Riding Hood," but "Hansel and Gretel" and stories of many other children lost and found in the woods are woven in, along with demon lovers, diabolical plants, and of course, werewolves aplenty.

The cast is grand throughout, especially Angela Lansbury as the archetypal, unevenly wise grandmother, Sarah Patterson as the growing girl, and David Warner in his marvelously ambiguous presentation of the male as father. (Perhaps the best moment in the film is when Warner eats a flower, munches it very thoroughly, and swallows it, all the while looking lovingly at his puzzled daughter.) I do hope you can manage to track *The Company of Wolves* down. It may not be easy, but it will be worth it.

Return of the Living Dead wastes no time skulking around pretending. Instead of the traditional disclaimer that all the following material is entirely fictitious and has nothing to do with real people, places, and, er, things, this film begins with a frank admission that everything you are about to see is the God's truth, based on actual fact. Whatever else

you, or I, or George Romero may think, you've got to admire such honesty.

The epic is directed and partially written by Dan O'Bannon, and I freely admit I enjoyed seeing him mistreat icky dead-folk makeup with gentle contempt. The shade of yellow he employs to tone one ambulant cadaver clearly demonstrates his total lack of respect for a number of special effects I've seen walking around lately. And an elaborately shuffling, eye-rolling creation that drips molasses-like gore is going to make it harder than ever for creators of artificial rot to be taken seriously. I also chortled over such absurdities as dead dogs cut in half so that biology students could study their innards without much effort and over desperate characters attempting to pass around still-squirming chunks of a chopped-up zombie (each piece in its own baggie), not to mention the sight of poor ninnies slowly realizing that their temperatures are always room temperature on account of their being dead.

Of course, if such rather crude humor puts you off, you may decide that *Return of the Living Dead* is not for you. But if having a bagman

quences. This, I think, is why it died so horribly at the box office. It was beyond the pale both with those who would ordinarily enjoy a sensitive, symbolic treatment of a young girl's growing up (but who considered the horror movie aspects, like noses turning into snouts, crass and childish) and with those (not our set, you understand, but the crude variety) who are particularly fond of seeing people becoming clawed and hairy right in front of their eyes (but who thought the layers of symbolism and thematic subtleties unsatisfactorily vague and even lah-dee-dah). The English can, apparently, handle this combination. But a lot of Americans, or at least those in charge of promoting and distributing movies, apparently cannot.

The film is based on a short story/essay/dream-sequence by Angela Carter. And except for the nightmarish ending, which suggests that maturity doesn't work, love fails, and the boogeyman gets you after all, the film is very faithful in feel and tone to the original piece. It imparts gentle understanding of our foibles, together with a full acceptance of how



The aristocracy reveals its ravaging face in Company of Wolves.



Updated Tin Man, longing for Jack Haley

killed and eaten by a sexy, nude zombie just when he was starting to get hopeful strikes you as innocent fun, then I suggest you go ahead and enjoy yourself. It's not *Gone with the Wind*, but what the hell?

Max Max Beyond Thunderdome continues the post-nuclear saga, and I freely confess I enjoyed it. The cynicism gets sharper with each of these ventures, as does a kind of underlying, pervasive sorrow, and, who knows? These Boschian nightmares might just work their way deeply enough into the psyche of some future president to dissuade him from pushing the button.

There are some very nice mean bits throughout. I particularly liked the idea of a city of rogues getting its power from methane derived from hogshit. There's also a touching sequence involving a tribe of children whose pathetic religion is based on the mad dream of being rescued from the collapse of their parents' entire civilization. Tina Turner gets to play a punk version of Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, and she and Mel Gibson bounce off one another with obvious enjoyment. My only serious objection to this Aussie fantasy is its implication that healthy, beautiful people will survive an all-out atomic war. You can bet your wallaby and platypus both, mate—that ain't gonna happen. Not even down under. Future presidents, please take note.

The dreamchild of director Walter Murch, **Return to Oz** is a very, very strange movie, indeed. It is obvious that Murch loves and has studied L. Frank Baum's world profoundly. The feeling for period is just right, the look of the palace interiors absolutely on target, and the final victory parade, complete with Tin Man, Patchwork Girl, and a multitude of other old pals, so spectacular it can make your eyes water with homesickness.

However, dammit, the film is totally wrongheaded because it is, otherwise, almost entirely gloomy and drear. Now I and everybody else who has lived in Oz know full well there are many sad moments there, but the pervasive feeling is one of pleasure and bright interest. It is, after all, a wonderland, where we are on a grand adventure that we (the Scarecrow and I) know deep in our hearts we will handily survive.

Photo copyright © 1984 Walt Disney Productions.



Ironbar Bassey (Angry Anderson), left, Dr. Dealgood (Ted Hodgemen), and the befeathered hordes of Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome.

Photo copyright © 1985 Warner Bros., Inc.

well against Clancy Brown's Mr. Nice Guy monster, the whole project is fated because of its essential effrontery.

Explorers is an even more annoying, self-indulgent failure because the poor thing had enough good stuff in it to warrant a lot more work before being rushed into filming. As it is, it's half-baked, half-jointed, and totally inconsistent. It's five different movies, none of which were thought through. I'm afraid everybody from Joe Dante (who directed it) on down was convinced that everything they thought of was totally brilliant and should have been glued in, no matter how irrelevant. Not so at all.

The best sequence in the show, a baffling exploration of an insane spaceship, has a fine, nutty feel to it. But then, when we are introduced to some promising aliens and begin to look forward to finding out what will happen next, nothing happens. It's *The End*, and for the first time we realize that the endless introduction we just sat through is supposed to be the movie.

Warning Sign takes the ol' timey zombie types razzed in *Return of the Living Dead* quite seriously, placing them in the confines of an extremely convincing biological research lab and playing them against such convincing actors as Sam Waterston. This turns out to be a bad idea, because when the stumbling menaces (not technically living dead, but a kind of high tech version thereof) start doing their familiar shuffle and strut amid such scrupulously believable surroundings, you can't help think that a place as gloriously dangerous as this one could easily have come up with something more dangerous and exciting than a crowd of homicidal sleepwalkers.

There's a tidy number of other films in our genre I sat through for your sake (the sacrifices I make!), but I see no serious reason to inflict any of them on you. Perhaps I should mention that **Godzilla 1985** with Raymond Burr rather disappointed me by not even trying to explore the cosmic potentials of its two stars. I had permitted myself to hope that the producers might have loosened up over the years and decided to have a little fun with *Godzi* and Ray, but no. So unless you're really serious about giant reptiles, skip it. ■

In Murch's *Oz*, unfortunately, there is no such assurance. Death, and what is worse, disease, intrude. When we reach the Emerald City, heaven help us, we find that it and all its inhabitants (including the Cowardly Lion!!!), have been turned into grey stone! Can you imagine anything more perverse, more totally depressing in all of fairyland? I can only thank God I did not see it when I was a child.

Furthermore, although some of the casting is good (pretty Fairuza Balk has a properly Dorothyish mix of innocence and spunk and Jean Marsh is a fine, witchy Mombi), Nicol Williamson—tall, manly, strong-jawed Nicol Williamson—is definitely not the Nome King. The Nome King, as everybody know., is a tiny, round, totally-ridiculous little villain given to comically bouncing up and down in one of his frequent rages. Jack Pumpkinhead as a mechanical man is also disappointing, while Bellina the hen, apart from her superb voice and dialect, is nothing more than a cleverly animated example of the taxidermist's art. Strangers to this magi-

cal land would be better off making their initial visits via Mr. Baum's books before chancing exposure.

Going downhill rather rapidly, we arrive at **The Bride**, a limp epic that has the gall to steal its premise from John Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein*, maybe one of the best horror movies ever given us. It is not wise to call up such associations lightly, and the presumptuous *Bride* suffers mightily by forcing us to compare it with the original.

The first sequence is actually brazen enough to think it's duplicating the last sequence of Whale's picture. But though it tosses in a Dwight Frye lookalike (the most successful gambit of the bunch), casts Quentin Crisp as Doctor Pretorius (a cute idea, but Crisp looks particularly wooden in comparison to Ernest Thesiger), and has the Bride hauled up to the lightning (no Elsa Lancaster this one, Jennifer Beals could have used her own stand in), it merely succeeds in reminding you of the much, much better original. Even with David Rappaport from *Time Bandits* using his small body

Creature feature fiascos.

by WELCH EVERMAN

Even before Abbott and Costello met Frankenstein, the Wolfman, and Dracula, people were laughing at horror films. Horror and humor seem to go well together, and if you don't believe that, try sitting through *Teen-agers From Outer Space*, *The Attack of the Fifty-Foot Woman*, or *Beach Girls and the Monster* with a straight face. But what's so funny about fear? When we laugh at a horror movie, what are we laughing at?

Most psychologists would say that we laugh to protect ourselves from things that frighten us. But those psychologists obviously don't watch many horror movies. If they did, they'd know that the funniest chillers aren't particularly frightening. And most of them aren't even trying to be funny. The truth is that, more often than not, when we laugh at a horror movie, we aren't laughing at our own fears but at the actors, the director, the plot, the script. We are laughing at bad movies. And today, when so many of these old and new creature feature fiascos are available on video cassettes, we even have the luxury of laughing ourselves sick in the privacy of our own homes.

Seeing your first really bad horror film is like drinking your first cup of coffee. You might not like it much in the beginning, but you soon acquire the taste. For the beginner, *Plan Nine from Outer Space* (available through Nostalgia Merchant Video) is a good place to start. It's probably the worst movie ever made and no doubt one of the funniest. Released in 1959, this film is the crowning achievement of director/writer Edward D. Wood, Jr., the worst filmmaker who ever lived. In fact, it's almost too easy to laugh at Wood's films, but there simply is no choice.

Plan Nine is not supposed to be funny. It is utterly serious and utterly incompetent. The acting is hopeless, the script is absurd and trite, the directing is amateurish, and the sets look like . . . sets. A group of people gathered at random on the street could make a better movie, but probably not a funnier one. The plot is simple enough—aliens are trying to take over the world, and they plan to do so by creating an army of zombies.

The film stars Bela Lugosi who, unfortunately, was dead long before Wood finished shooting. So the director spliced in some old footage of Lugosi—the same footage again and again—then gave the rest of his part to a double who looked nothing like him. Wood's solution to this little problem is typical of his approach to filmmaking: anything to fill the screen for an hour or so. But watching this film, you get the feeling that Wood and everyone else were really doing the best they could. And that, of course, makes the movie even funnier.

It's amazing to think that Wood actually made more than one film in his career, but it's true. His earlier movie *Bride of the Monster* (Budget Video), again starring Lugosi, is a bit better than *Plan Nine*, perhaps because Lugosi was alive throughout the entire shooting. But *Bride* is also done in Wood's distinctive style, from the giant rubber octopus that mad scientist Lugosi keeps in his basement to the closing scene in which the police chief says with a perfectly straight face: "He tampered with things in God's domain." You'll love it.

Wood's films are funny because of their total incompetence, and yet his premises of alien invasion and mad scientists out to conquer the world seem logical enough to fantasy fans. But suppose there were a film in which a vampire dog went around transforming other dogs into vampire mutts. Well, if you like that premise, you'll love *Dracula's Dog* (Video Communications). Yes, there is such a movie, made in 1977, directed by Arthur Band, and starring Jose Ferrer as the chief vampire hunter/dog catcher. Unlike *Plan Nine*, this film is rather well-made—it even uses professional actors. But it is hopelessly stupid. The premise here is that Dracula had a pet dog, Zoltan, who was also a vampire and who is accidentally revived in modern times.

Connoisseurs of really bad cinema will love the scene in which a chubby little vampire puppy digs its way out of its grave and bounces off into the night, wagging its tail as it searches for new victims. As happens in so many bad chillers, a ridiculous plot taken seriously by the filmmaker results in another accidental comedy classic. And what about *They Saved Hitler's Brain* (Video

Communications) and *Wrestling Women vs. The Aztec Mummy* (Budget Video)? Well, the list could go on and on, but you get the idea.

So what could be worse than a ludicrous horror movie that isn't trying to be funny? Answer: a ludicrous movie that *is* trying to be funny. It didn't take horror filmmakers long to realize that people were laughing at their best efforts, so they decided: Instead of making movies that are funny by accident, why not try to make some that are funny on purpose? Unfortunately, most of these attempts at horror comedy are just *Plan Nine* all over again with a few stupid jokes thrown in. We don't laugh with these atrocities, we laugh at them.

Made in 1973, *Werewolf of Washington* (Monterey Home Video) provides a good example of bad horror humor. The film stars Dean Stockwell—who should know better—as an assistant press secretary to the President of the U.S. of A. who is bitten by a werewolf while on assignment in Hungary and returns to D.C. as a werewolf himself. The budget for this movie is low, and the humor is even lower. When the old gypsy lady—and what's a werewolf flick without an old gypsy lady—tries to explain to Stockwell about the sign of the pentagram, he replies: "So that's who's behind all this. The Pentagon!" Director Milton Moses Ginsberg liked that joke so much, he used it twice, along with innumerable lycanthropic one-liners like "You're just a terrible wolf, aren't you?" Oh, where are Abbott and Costello now that we really need them?

A recent release, *BloHazard* (Continental Video) is the lowest form of pseudo-horror pseudo-comedy, but again you can have a good chuckle at the expense of the director and the actors. The title suggests that the film is about genetic engineering, but in fact the plot involves a mad scientist who is trying to transfer matter from another dimension into our own, using hi-tech equipment with a lot of colored lights and a young woman assistant with ESP and large breasts. Fortunately, or unfortunately, something goes wrong, and the machinery brings forth a guy in a rubber monster suit who slaughters most of the neighborhood before our hero does him in.

The film is full of feeble attempts



William Hudson looks for a fresh vein in *Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman*.

at comic relief—the bumbling winos, the nagging wife, the thing tearing up a poster advertising *E.T.* Then, at the end, director Fred Glen Ray runs about ten minutes of “funny” outtakes, which show the actors blowing their insipid lines and making even bigger fools of themselves than they did in the film. Obviously, during post-production, Ray realized what a piece of junk he had brought forth, and so he decided to add the bleeps and blunders at the end, as if to say: “You see, it was just a gag. We knew it was a loser all along.”

As we’ve seen, there are a lot of very funny horror movies around, but there are only a few true horror comedies—films that are genuinely frightening and genuinely funny at the same time. One of the best is Roger Corman’s *Little Shop of Horrors*, recently released for video by Vidmark Entertainment. By 1960, when Corman shot *Little Shop* in two and a half days, he understood that the bad horror movie had become an established form in its own right—in fact, he had made quite a few himself. *Little Shop* parodies that familiar form, turning the conventions of these low-budget losers inside out and, at the same time, going much farther than most horror filmmakers of the time were willing to go.

The plot, based loosely on John Collier’s short story “Green Thoughts,” is as ridiculous as that of any other low-budget horror flick, but Corman has the advantage of know-

ing how ridiculous it really is. Seymour Krelboind, an assistant in Gravis Mushnik’s skid row flower shop, accidentally creates a new breed of plant which he names Audrey Jr. after his girl friend. Seymour becomes the darling of the local horticulturists, but, in fact, he has never done anything right in his life, and the creation of Audrey Jr. is no exception. He soon discovers that his plant eats people, and he winds up providing the meals after accidentally killing a number of passersby.

The result is a horror comedy classic, because, unlike other horror films that try to be funny, *Little Shop* is incredibly well-made, given its budget and shooting schedule. Corman’s film is also consistently funny—almost every frame is good for a laugh. In addition, Corman is providing a different kind of humor. While other horror films ask us to laugh at stupid jokes, Corman asks us to laugh at terrifying scenes of dismembered hands and feet being fed to Audrey Jr. He expects us to be amused by Jack Nicholson, who makes his first screen appearance here as a masochistic undertaker looking for thrills in a dentist’s office. Corman wants us to laugh at pain, torture, murder, and gore. And we do.

Roger Corman didn’t invent black humor, but he exploits it to its fullest in *Little Shop*, and the best horror comedies seem to have that same dark vision of what is funny.

Larry Cohen’s film *Q* (MCA Videocassette) is another example of horror comedy at its best. The plot is downright zany—the remnants of an ancient Aztec cult in New York City (!?) revive the giant plumed serpent god Quetzalcoatl who builds a nest in the dome of the Chrysler Building and proceeds to find its daily food by snatching citizens from rooftops. And why is all this happening in NYC? As one character explains: “New York is famous for good eating.”

In lesser hands, a film based on this premise would be a travesty, but Cohen makes it work. *Q* is a 90-minute string of dark visual and verbal gags. The first victim is a window washer who is decapitated by the winged monster. Police are baffled because they can’t find the head. As a detective played by Richard Roundtree says to another cop: “We had a window washer yesterday whose head just floated away like a balloon.” The camera pans immediately to a balloon floating high over the city, then to a momentary glimpse of a huge claw, combining a laugh and a shudder in a single shot.

The film is full of bird images, first as victims (chickens in a barbecue joint), later as victimizers (pigeons pecking at the remains of one of *Q*’s victims). And the cast is wonderful, including Michael Moriarty as a cowardly, two-bit thief who discovers *Q*’s nest and tries to sell the information to the city, and David Carradine as the cop who unravels the whole plot. As looney as it sounds, *Q* is that rarity in the horror genre—a funny and beautifully-made film.

George A. Romero, who gave us the unrelenting horror of *Night of the Living Dead* (Nostalgia Merchant), also has a very dark sense of humor, and he isn’t above pulling the old cream-pie-in-the-zombie’s-face routine in his *Dawn of the Dead* (Thorn EMI). Set in a shopping mall overrun by zombies, *Dawn* is a satire on American consumerism, and what is being consumed here is human flesh. As in *Night of the Living Dead*, in *Dawn* the dead have come back to life to prey on the living. This is one of the most violent movies ever made, perhaps second only to Romero’s most recent theatrical release, *Day of the Dead*, and it is full of dismembered bodies,

TZ VIDEO

exploding heads, and other stomach-wrenching splatter effects. And yet Romero invites us to laugh again and again at zombies stumbling on escalators, at a nun zombie and a Hare Krishna zombie, at carnage set to shopping mall Muzak.

Dawn of the Dead is a very successful horror comedy because of Romero's ambivalent view of humor. In one scene, a zombie who is about to attack one of the film's heroes is decapitated by the blades of a helicopter. The scene is played strictly for laughs, and it is very funny. But, only a few frames later, another hero is forced to machine gun two child zombies who are trying to kill him. There is nothing funny about this scene at all, and this rapid shift from humor to horror is indicative of Romero's style, which provides comedy but never comedy relief. *Dawn of the Dead* is deeply disturbing because we never know, moment to moment, whether we'll be laughing or screaming.

Creepshow (Warner Home Video), written by Stephen King, is Romero's comedy masterpiece, very different from *Dawn of the Dead*, but very funny and often very frightening. It is based directly on the 1950s horror comic books published by EC Comics, the company that took the brunt of the anti-comics campaign of the fifties because of its graphic depictions of gore. The anti-comics crusaders of thirty years ago never seemed to notice that EC Comics, like *Vault of Horror* and *Tales from the Crypt*, were very, very funny (EC also published *Mad*). But filmmakers like Romero, Corman, and Cohen got the joke, and their movies continue to explore the dark humor of violence and death.

In *Creepshow*, Romero uses a comic book format to present five stories in the EC style. As in the best horror comic books and the best horror comedies, most of the humor here is not verbal but visual—a decorated human head serves as a Father's Day cake, a greedy landlord is consumed by cockroaches before your eyes, and so on. In Romero's hands, this is very funny stuff, and, for the most part, what pleases us is

the justice of it all. In all EC comics, and in Romero's horror comedies, all victims of the supernatural deserve what they get. Unfortunately, this dark vision also holds that, because nobody's perfect, everybody deserves to be a victim.

But what's so funny about decapitations, gruesome murders, and buckets of blood, to borrow a title from another Corman film? Not a thing—if it were real. But Romero, Corman, and Cohen remind us again and again that their films don't offer us the real world. They offer a world populated by zombies, monsters, and man-eating plants, a world that is totally unreal, totally insane, and that's why these films are so funny.

On the other hand, these horror comedies are also frightening because, on some level, they do offer us our own world. Romero, Corman, and Cohen want us to laugh at death, destruction, dismemberment, and gore—in short, the things we see every night on the evening news. And why? Perhaps because, in a world gone mad, laughter is the only sane response, the only thing that makes us different from animals, the only thing that keeps us human. ■

FISH

(continued from page 45)

and collated into the international folklore motif-index; however, some recent critics have begun to call it derivative.¹⁵

Fish visual artists have never been accused of timidity and *déjà vu*. HolyCross Smith, *New York Times* art critic, said of the recent Fish retrospective mounted by the Guggenheim:

Not since Bosch or Manfredi have such colorful and erotic scenes of violence and mayhem been committed to canvas. It is possible that works by such painters as Ravenswood,

CookCo, DallasGen, Lutheran, and CompanyofMary may be among the Fish's most lasting contribution to civilization.¹⁶

However, it is in the area of popular culture that Fish influence is perhaps most pervasive. Fish motifs are still found in such cultural artifacts as furniture, dishes and silverware, wallpaper, tile and fabric patterns, jewelry, toys, calendars, tattoos, coins, stamps, hair styles, musical instruments; in the names of automobiles, perfumes, magazines, cosmetics, sporting goods, patent medicines, streets, suburbs, parks, and in the names we give our children; in social and religious rituals—weddings, baptisms, funerals—and cast in the façades and ornament of buildings,

bridges, and public works. The recent traffic in Fish antiques leads one to believe that Fish artifacts will endure. Fifteen million vermeil copies of the 14 kt. shark ring and carp brooch of the Guggenheim Fish Retrospective were sold in the museum gift shop, thus effectively perpetuating the motifs into the next century.¹⁷

And Fish influence lingers in another dimension, at once more subtle and more profound: psychologists report that cannibal fantasies, dreams, and symbols survive in the unconscious of the Fish's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and offer the opinion that Fish archetypal symbols are perhaps passed on through the genes and have become part of the universal shared unconscious of mankind.¹⁸

One wonders if it could happen again: a capricious government edict, an unforeseen result, civilization on the brink, mankind forever changed. Lest we forget, the Fish flag flies at the United Nations, forever at half-mast; near, but set apart from the national flags: a flying fish, rampant on a field of scarlet, with a silver stake driven through its heart, *bar sinister*. ■

¹⁵See Melissa Edgewater Chan, "Little-Red-Bathing-Suit and the Shark," *North Carolina Folklore*, 97 (Feb. 1994), pp. 7-15. Access code: FISHFOLK.

¹⁶Quoted in *One Hundred Years of Fish: Catalog of the 2007 Fish Retrospective*, ed. Najat StAnne-Zion and Resurrection Schneidhorst (New York: Cetus Press, 2007), p.viii. Access code: GUGGFISH.

¹⁷Cataloging and indexing of Fish popular culture is not yet complete and is a fertile field for the scholar. General access codes: FISHBIBL, FISHCULT, FISHHELP. Or look for information under specific headings: FISHHAIR, FISHWEDD, FISHTOYS, FISHDISH, etc.

¹⁸Access code: FISH OVERSOUL.

Nightmare videotapes—available by mail.

DEADLY IMPACT. 1984. \$69.95. An illegal gambling operation becomes a gamble for life. Directed by Larry Ludman. VHS/Beta. 90 minutes. Available by mail from Vestron Video, P.O. Box 4000, Stamford, CT 06907.

PREMATURE BURIAL. \$69.95. An Edgar Allan Poe classic brought to life by director Roger Corman. VHS/Beta. 81 minutes. Available by mail from Vestron Video, P.O. Box 4000 Stamford, CT 06907.

THE KILLING MACHINE. 1976. \$49.95. A Japanese soldier returns to his native Osaka from World War II to find the town in the hands of thugs. Using his secret mastery of the martial art Tsao Lin, he proceeds to clean up. UHX/Beta. 89 minutes. Available by mail from Prism Entertainment, 1875 Century Park East, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON. 1981. \$79.95. Two American youths on a European adventure find it turning into a lycanthropic nightmare after they are attacked by a werewolf. Directed by John Landis. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 97 minutes. Available by mail from Vestron Video, P.O. Box 4000, Stamford, CT 06907.

DOCTOR PHIBES RISES AGAIN. 1972. \$69.95. Vincent Price as Doctor Phibes rises from the dead on a mission of grave importance. Directed by Robert Fuest. VHS/Beta. Rated PG. 89 minutes. Available by mail from Vestron Video, P.O. Box 4000, Stamford, CT 06907.

TRANCERS. 1985. \$79.95. The fate of a cult of zombie-like creatures ("trancers") lies in the hands of Jack Deth, defender of justice and trancer-hunter extraordinaire. Produced and directed by Charles Band. VHS/Beta. Rated PG-13. 76 minutes. Available by mail from Vestron Video, P.O. Box 4000, Stamford, CT 06907.

SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN. 1970. \$69.95. Vincent Price as a mad doctor trying to create a race of fearless superhumans. Directed by Gordon Hessler. VHS/Beta. 95 minutes. Available by mail from Vestron Video, P.O. Box 4000, Stamford, CT 06907.

THE COMPANY OF WOLVES. 1984. \$79.95. A gentle, romantic, and lyrical werewolf movie. Directed by Neil Jordan. VHS/Beta. 95 minutes. Available by mail from Vestron Video, P.O. Box 4000, Stamford, CT 06907.

THE DEVIL'S GIFT. 1984. \$69.95. Life for an average family turns into a nightmare when a young boy's birthday present conjures up unimaginable horrors. Directed by Kenneth J. Berton. VHS/Beta. 112 minutes. Available by mail from Vestron Video, P.O. Box 4000, Stamford, CT 06907.

CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDS. 1962. \$39.95. In a world where few humans are left alive, robots want humanity. Scientist Megawon tries to give it to them. Directed by Wesley E. Berry, produced by Wesley E. Berry and Edward J. Kay. VHS/Beta. 84 minutes. Available by mail through Monterey Home Video, 7920 Alabama Avenue, Canoga Park, CA 91304.

THE GHOST GOES WEST. 1936. \$39.95. A Scottish ghost follows when his castle is torn down and reassembled in Florida. Directed by Rene Claire, produced by Alexandra Korda. VHS/Beta. 82 minutes. Available by mail through Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER. 1941. \$39.95. Stephen Vincent Benet's Classic. Directed by William Dieterle. VHS/Beta. 109 minutes. Available by mail through Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067.



Bo Svenson in *Deadly Impact*.

THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MILTY. 1947. \$39.95. From Thurber's classic tale. Directed by Norman Z. McLeod. VHS/Beta. 110 minutes. Available by mail through Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

THE SEVENTH SEAL. 1956. \$39.95. A medieval knight plays chess with Death. At stake: his life and the lives of his companions. Written and directed by Ingmar Bergman. VHS/Beta. 96 minutes. Available by mail through Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

ASYLUM OF SATAN. 1976. \$49.95. Directed by William P. Girdler. VHS/Beta. 82 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

CRYPT OF THE LIVING DEAD. 1973. \$49.95. A camp thriller set on "Vampire Island" involving cannibalism that comes from beyond the grave. Directed by Ray Danton. VHS/Beta. Rated PG. 81 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

THE ASPHYX. 1972. \$49.95. The key to eternal life turns into an express ticket to terror. Directed by Peter Newbrook. VHS/Beta. Rated PG. 98 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD. 1970. \$59.95. An anthology of four horror shorts by Robert Bloch. Directed by Peter Duffell. VHS/Beta. Rated GP. 101 minutes. Available by mail through Prism Entertainment, 1875 Century Park East, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

THE MIND SNATCHERS. 1972. \$59.95. A misfit GI discovers that the hospital he's living in is actually a laboratory studying mind control. Directed by Bernard Girard. VHS/Beta. Rated PG. 94

minutes. Available by mail through Prism Entertainment, 1875 Century Park East, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

BLOOD CULT. 1985. \$59.95. A gruesome and campy feature made specifically for the home video market. Directed by Christopher Lewis, produced by Linda Lewis. VHS/Beta. 89 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

THE LADY VANISHES. 1938. \$19.95. A menacing magician, a sinister brain surgeon, and a nun provide the clues to the mystery of a missing governess. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. VHS/Beta. 96 minutes. Available by mail through Vidmark Entertainment, 2450 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite one, Santa Monica, CA 09403.

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS. 1960. \$19.95. Director Roger Corman's infamous gross-out comedy. VHS/Beta. 75 minutes. Available by mail through Vidmark Entertainment, 2450 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite one, Santa Monica, CA 90403.

INVASION OF THE ANIMAL PEOPLE. 1962. \$29.95. Aliens begin an invasion of the Earth by crash-landing in the Arctic. Produced and directed by Jerry Warren. VHS/Beta. 72 minutes. Available by mail through Vidmark Entertainment, 2450 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite one, Santa Monica, CA 90403.

THE KILLING FIELDS. 1984. \$79.95. (L.V. \$39.98). The true story of two men caught up in Kampuchea's Khmer Rouge revolution. Directed by Roland Joffe, produced by David Puttnam. Beta/VHS/CX Stereo Laserdisc. Rated R. 142 minutes. Available by mail through Warner Home Video, 4000 Warner Boulevard, Burbank, CA 91522.

ON THE COMET. 1970. \$39.95. Partly



Angeles, CA 90067.

SHE WAITS. 1971. \$59.95. Patty Duke as a young bride who finds the vengeful spirit of her groom's first wife trying to possess her. Directed by Delbert Mann. VHS/Beta. 74 minutes. Available by mail through Prism Entertainment, 1875 Century Park East, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

BEAST OF THE YELLOW NIGHT. 1972. \$49.95. Hunted and tormented in the jungle, a man strikes a deal with a serpent who turns out to be—you guessed it—the devil himself. Written and directed by Eddie Romero. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 87 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

THE LEGEND OF THE WOLF WOMAN. 1977. \$49.95. A young werewoman's career runs aground against romance. Directed by R.D. Silver. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 70 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

BEYOND ATLANTIS. 1973. \$49.95. Water-breathing aborigines hunt for fishermen to mate with. Directed by Eddie Romero. VHS/Beta. Rated PG. 91 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

MANSON. 1985. \$59.95. The story of the Charles Manson family and the Tate-La Bionce murders. Produced and directed by Robert Hendrickson. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 83 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

WITCHES' BREW. 1981. \$59.95. A housewife takes to cesting spells to aid her husband, with humorously disastrous results. Directed by Richard Schorr and Herbert L. Strock. VHS/Beta. Rated PG. 98 minutes. Available by mail from Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

THE FOG. 1980. \$39.95. The ghosts of ancient seamen rise from the deep, enshrouded in an eerie fog. Directed by John Carpenter. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 90 minutes. Available by mail from Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

THE VAMPIRE LOVERS. 1971. \$59.95. Stars Peter Cushing. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 89 minutes. Available by mail from Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

THE EVIL. 1978. \$59.95. Terror lurks in the basement of an old mansion. Directed by Gus Trikonis. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 90 minutes. Available by mail from Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

THE RITUALS. 1977. \$39.95. Five doctors camping out in the wilderness find themselves hip-deep in horror. Directed by Peter Carter. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 100 minutes. Available by mail from Embassy Home Entertainment, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

SON OF HERCULES VS. VENUS. 1980. \$39.95. A Saturday-matinee-classic epic of ancient warriors in mortal combat with the gods. Directed by Marcello Baldi. VHS/Beta. Rated PG. 87 minutes. Available by mail through Best Film and Video, 98 Cutter Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11021.

DEATH RAY. 1977. \$39.95. A race to stop terrorists from destroying the world. Directed by F.G. Cerullo. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 82 minutes. Available by mail through Best Film and Video, 98 Cutter Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11021.

VIDEO WARS. 1983. \$39.95. International agents battle an evil electronics genius. Directed

by Mario Giampeolo. VHS/Beta. Rated R. 90 minutes. Available by mail through Best Film and Video, 98 Cutter Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11021.

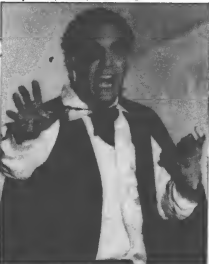
GAS-S-S. 1970. \$69.95. Cult comedy about a mysterious vapor which speeds up the aging process and leaves only those under twenty-five to rule the world. Directed by Roger Corman. VHS/Beta. Available by mail through Lightning Video, 1011 High Ridge Road, P.O. Box 4384, Stamford, CT 06907.

DOCTOR DOOM. 1985. \$19.95. Features Marvel Comics' infamous villain in the short cartoons "Meet Doctor Doom" and "Cannon of Doom." VHS/Beta. 60 minutes. Available by mail through Prism Entertainment, 1875 Century Park East, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

PIRATES OF THE SEVEN SEAS. \$69.95. An English adventurer seizes the throne of the Kingdom of Sarawak. Directed by Hubert Lenzi. VHS/Beta. 90 minutes. Available by mail through Lightning Video, 1011 High Ridge Road, P.O. Box 4384, Stamford, CT 06907.

THE JUNGLE MASTER. \$69.95. The legend of the wildman and the search for a missing young girl lead Lord Callar and Captain Fox into the darkest heart of Africa. Directed by Miles Deem. VHS/Beta. 90 minutes. Available by mail through Lightning Video, 1011 High Ridge Road, P.O. Box 4384, Stamford, CT 06907.

ALADDIN AND HIS MAGIC LAMP. 1976. \$39.95. VHS/Beta. 90 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.



Tom Savini in *The Ripper*.

THE RIPPER. 1986. \$59.95. A made-for-home-video slasher movie. Directed by Christopher Lewis, produced by Linda Lewis. VHS/Beta. 90 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

DR. GORE. 1975. \$49.95. A mad scientist sets out to create the perfect women. Directed by Pet Patterson. VHS/Beta. 90 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS. 1977. \$39.95. Musical, live action/animation. Directed by Peter Hunt. VHS/Beta. Rated G. 80 minutes. Available by mail through United Home Video, 6535 East Skelly Drive, Tulsa, OK 74145.

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animated Czech version of Jules Verne's classic novel, *Off on a Comet*. Written and directed by Karel Zeman. VHS/Beta. Rated G. 76 minutes. Available by mail through Best Film and Video, 98 Cutter Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11021.

RING OF TERROR. 1962. \$29.95. A fraternity makes a pledge go grave robbing, with horrific results. Directed by Clerk Taylor. VHS/Beta. 72 minutes. Available by mail through Vidmark Entertainment, 2450 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite one, Santa Monica, CA 90403.

BRAIN 17. 1985. \$24.95. At the behest of a little boy, a benevolent robot saves the world from an evil-powerful computer. VHS/Beta. 72 minutes. Available by mail through Family Home Entertainment, 7920 Alabama Avenue, Canoga Park, CA 91304.

INSPECTOR GADGET, VOLUME 4. 1983. \$39.95. Inspector Gadget and Dr. Claw battle their way from New York to the headwaters of the Amazon. VHS/Beta. 90 minutes. Available by mail through Family Home Entertainment, 7920 Alabama Avenue, Canoga Park, CA 91304.

ESCAPE FROM CELLBLOCK THREE. 1978. \$49.95. Five female prison inmates make a violent escape and begin a desperate run for Mexico and freedom. Directed by Kent Osborne. VHS/Beta. 89 minutes. Available by mail through Prism Entertainment, 1875 Century Park East, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

FRIGHTMARE. 1978. \$59.95. Two sisters become involved in a series of grisly murders, and in the process learn that their parents were institutionalized years before for a similar series of crimes. Directed by Peter Walker. VHS/Beta. 86 minutes. Available by mail through Prism Entertainment, 1875 Century Park East, Los

THE CROSSING

(continued from page 59)

The sun hung over me forever. My shadow was lost beneath me, and I waited patiently for it to lengthen. The noise was so constant I forgot its existence. Breaks came, but mostly I stood, the only silent object in a sea of sound. I watched the black blurs, trying to pry them apart, wishing they would split like the water that had separated for Moses. I drank more water but hoarded the meat and juice.

Finally, the sun began to fall. The shadows of cars licked my feet, then covered them. More gaps opened, and I made steady progress for a while. At four o'clock there was still no end in sight. The sun dipped low. Soon it was hard to see for the glare.

"Careful now," I heard Vern say. "Sun'll play every trick she knows."

"It doesn't matter now," my mother sighed.

"You just be careful."

For a while the openings were still clear. They came quickly, but soon I was shielding my eyes. The pack weighed heavily on my back, though it was no more than a few pounds. The sun sunk to the horizon. I looked straight into it, then stopped.

"You are a blind man," my mother said.

"Take a rest," Vern advised.

I watched the cars move in unison, like cogs in a clock, rolling with the cruelty of age. They'd never wind down. The cars were the only permanent thing in the world.

"You're only flesh and blood," my mother breathed.

"And that's a damned lot," Vern said.

Twilight faded. I fished out the can and ate the last of the meat. The juice went next. My legs had ached so long I'd forgotten the pain. Finally, I sat down. I wondered if I'd ever get up.

"Follow me," a new voice said, and I wondered if it were my father.

"You fool," she hissed.

"Follow me."

The highway was a storm of steel. Cold headlights clicked on, only to have their beams broken by the cars ahead. I looked into the glare, then up at the blood-red moon.

"Full moon," Vern whispered.

"There ain't no good in it."

"There's no good in any of this," my mother said.

"Just be careful."

A gap opened, and I ran it for all I was worth. My feet barely brushed the pavement. Air sang in my ears, competing with the deluge of highway sounds. Finally, the walls of traffic caught me. I stood on a white island, my eyes reaching for another void.

I remembered Vern's eyes, old and yellow, surrounded with flesh getting ready to crumble. I felt as old as he was. Then I glanced at the moon and damned its magic.

Another break came.

"Follow me," my father grinned.

I ran. When I stopped, time went fast, then slowed, and the moon climbed a lot, then a little.

Finally, the walls of traffic caught me. I stood on a white island, my eyes reaching for another void.

The sky was black, but on the highway headlights crowded the darkness. I stood, watched, and ran for hours. The moon rose high, pulling my thoughts to it like a magnet. I looked at it, flinched, and cursed the sky.

Just then the world went black. The highway shouted. The moon smiled. I nearly fell forward, then steadied myself.

"I'm OK," I told myself, but I was shaking.

"Follow me." His voice was laughing.

"Come back," my mother cried.

I looked behind me. There were still lights where I'd come from. They danced in front of my eyes, and I grew faint.

"Sit," Vern's voice ordered.

"But—"

"Sit."

I sat. For hours I watched,

listened, and sank into waking dreams. The dreams wove shadows into wraiths, while the moon became a death ray.

Finally, the moon fell. The first glimmering of red lit the sky behind me. I was sitting up, but half-asleep. I went numb, and there was strength in the numbness. Time began to move. Dawn was like a finger poking my ribs. My eyes opened. It was time to go.

There was no food left, but I drank some water. There wasn't much left. I stayed thirsty, saving some for later. If there were a later. Any hope I had left wasn't in my legs. I could barely move them. A gap opened. I should've made sixty lanes. Instead I barely made thirty. My heart was pounding, and I was wheezing from the exhaust. Another opening came. I ran it at a trot. When I finished I coughed horribly. Then I saw the other side.

It was a grey wall, I couldn't tell how high, but I doubted it was much more than seven feet. Suddenly my legs felt better. I could jump it.

"You see?" Vern said.

"You fool," my mother chanted.

"Follow me," my father called.

That was when the black waves receded, and I saw the final gap. I ran, but there were no cars coming. All the traffic was behind me now. The roar lessened. I felt my feet catch fire. Above the wall I could see the brightness of the pre-dawn sky. The cars were gone. The wall beckoned.

"Follow me."

I leapt high. My hands grasped the concrete. My foot got a hold as my arms pulled hard. I toppled over, and fell ten feet. I hit sand. For a moment I lay still, gazing up at a blueing sky and the sheer, high wall. On this side it was much higher. A new sound roared into my ears. I sat up slowly, then looked across the long white sands. Waves washed an eternity of sand. I stared in both directions. Wall, beach, and ocean met the horizon.

No voice spoke inside my head. The roar now came from the waves.

I looked at the wall. At its base sat a line of people stretching forever. Their eyes were holes. Some of their skulls had toppled inward like the chimneys on fallen-down houses.

I stood, then walked a few yards along the wall to the first skeleton. By his outstretched fingers sat a juice bottle with a piece of paper inside. On the yellowed paper was a diagram.

I sat down wearily.

To wait forever. ■

TUBE

(continued from page 55)

not forgetting their roots. They plan more neat little references to the old show, like bringing back Billy Mumy, the actor who played the child in Hitchcock's version of "Bang! You're Dead!" and giving producer Christopher Crowe a cameo as a surgeon in "Night Fever." Then, of course, there is the revival of Hitchcock's wonderful stabs at the sponsors, which Mirish suspects, the contemporary victims will find "quietly amusing."

One look at the glowing windows and floating fetal globe in the opening title of **Twilight Zone** proves that it is not stinting on production either. What's more, producer Phil DeGuere promised in our last issue some radically new video special effects. But the real coupe at **Twilight Zone** is the writers. DeGuere has hired some of horror's best.

The list starts with the show's creative consultant, Harlan Ellison, who hardly needs introduction in these pages. And even if some of you were disappointed in the way his story "Shatterday" came out on the show's premiere, don't tune out too early. No less an authority than Stephen King says of an Ellison adaptation, "I'm delighted with the screenplay.... It's very good." He should know. The story he's talking about is his own—"Grammar," directed by Bradford May.

Ellison and King, however, are only the beginning. **Twilight Zone** is also doing Ray Bradbury's "The Burning Man" (directed by J.D. Feigelson and starring Piper Laurie) and "The Star" by Arthur C. Clarke (featuring Fritz Weaver, a TZ veteran of "Third from the Sun") and former *Outer Limits* and *Star Trek* director Gerd Oswald. (Oswald is also directing a story called "Beacon.")

You can also expect some good stuff from story editor Rockne O'Bannon, who has already proved himself with "World Play," and from Robert McCammon, who wrote "Night-crawlers" starring Scott Paulin and directed by Phil DeGuere.

Even though the new show isn't bringing back Rod Serling in color, it hasn't forgotten him. Watch in December, when they will unveil their remake of Rod Serling's "The Night

of the Meek," originally shot on video. They even tried to get Art Carney to recreate his original role. But alas, says TZ publicist Rick Myers, "He felt he had already done it and saw no reason to play it again." Nevertheless, there is an extraordinary replacement—Richard Mulligan.

You can also look forward to seeing original **Twilight Zone** writer Charles Beaumont's "Dead Woman's Shoes," directed by Peter Medak (*Changeling* and *Ruling Class*). Then, there are all the other goodies Rod wrought. After all, who inspired these shows?

George Romero, who produces **Tales from the Darkside**, bears another distinction: He knew the time was ripe for Zonelike tv revivals before anyone else.

Tales from the Darkside's low-budget black humor has been on the air for more than a year now, and although its special effects are sometimes obvious, it's thriving. The reasons? One is the good taste it shows in selecting stories. They're showing tales by many of the people we've published in this magazine. "Printer's Devil" by Ron Goulart, who has been with us from the beginning, is being aired the last week of January. Michael Kube-McDowell's "Slippage" was the basis of an episode by the same name last year. This year, he is writing a number of **Darkside** teleplays. His "Effect and Cause," about time running backward, starring Susan Strasberg, will be shown the first week in December.

The work of another TZ writer, Haskell Barkin's teleplay "The Impressionist," featuring Chuck McCann, can be seen the week of December twenty-third. And TZ veteran Pamela Sargent's story coming up in February sounds wonderful. Called "The Shrine," it's about a woman trying to win recognition from her chilly mother, who is fonder of her daughter as a ghostly little girl.

Then there are the shows from Romero's film crew, taking time out between *Day of the Dead* and the forthcoming *Pet Sematary*. Coming up again in February is a story about a diabolical disc jockey, "Devil's Advocate," that Romero wrote himself.

If we know our Romero, it will be deadily fun.

—RB

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THE FIFTH QUARTER

(continued from page 28)

I had a pretty good picture of the room in my head now. I got up in a crouch and ran, stepping over Sarge's sprawled legs and into the corner. I got into the bathtub and poked my eyes up over the edge. There was no sound. No sound at all. Even the wood's noises seemed to have stopped. The bottom of the tub was gritty with flaked-off bathtub ring. I waited.

About five minutes went by. It seemed like five hours.

Then the light flicked on again, this time in the bedroom window. I ducked my head while the light bounced through the doorway. It probed briefly and clicked off.

Silence again. A long, loud silence. On the dirty surface of Sarge's porcelain bathtub I saw everything. Barney, with the clotted blood on his belly. Sarge, standing frozen in Jagger's flashlight beam, holding the razor blade professionally between thumb and first finger. And a dark shadow with no face. Jagger. The fifth quarter.

Suddenly there was a voice, just outside the door. It was soft and cultured, almost womanish, but not effete. It sounded deadly and competent as hell.

"Hey, you."

I kept quiet. He wasn't getting my number without dialing a little.

When the voice came again it was by the window. "I'm going to kill you, fella. I came to kill them. Now there's just you."

A pause while he shifted position again. When the voice came, it came from the window just over my head—the one above the bathtub. My guts crawled up into my throat. If he flashed that light now—

"No fifth wheels need apply, fella. Sorry."

I could barely hear him moving to his next position. It turned out to be back to the doorway. "I've got my quarter with me, fella. You want to come and take it?"

I felt an urge to cough and repressed it.

"Come and get it, fella." His voice was mocking. "The whole pie. Come and take it away."

But I didn't have to. He knew it. I was holding the chips. I could find the money now. With his single quarter, Jagger had no chance.

This time the silence really spun

out. A half-hour, an hour, forever. Eternity squared. My body was going numb with stiffness. Outside, the wind was tuning up, making it impossible to hear anything but rattling snow against the walls. It was very cold. My feet had left me long ago. Now my legs were beginning to feel like blocks of wood.

Then, around one-thirty, a ghostly stirring sound like crawling rats in the darkness. I stopped breathing. Somehow Jagger had got in. He was right in the middle of the room—

Then I got it. *Rigor mortis*, hurried by the cold, was rearranging Sarge for the last time. I relaxed a little.

That was when the door rammed open and Jagger charged through, ghostly and visible in a mantle of white snow, tall and loose and gan-

I kicked the gun out of his hand, hearing the wet wood sound of breaking bones. His feet rattled a fast, unconscious tattoo on the floor.

gling. I let him have it and the bullet punched a hole through the side of his head. And in the brief gunflash, I saw that what I had holed was a scarecrow with no face, dressed in some farmer's thrown-out pants and shirt. The bur-lap head fell off the broomstick neck as it hit the floor. Then Jagger was shooting at me.

He was holding a semi-automatic pistol, and the innards of the bathtub were like a great percussive hollow cymbal. Porcelain flew up, bounced off the wall, struck my face. Wood splinters rained on me.

Then he was charging, never letting up. He was going to shoot me in the tub like a fish in a barrel. I couldn't even put my head up.

It was Sarge who saved me. Jagger stumbled over one big, dead foot, staggered, and pumped bullets into the floor instead of over my head. Then

I was on my knees. I pretended I was Vida Blue. I pegged Barney's big, '45 at his head.

The gun hit him but didn't stop him. I stumbled over the rim of the tub getting out to tackle him, and Jagger put two groggy shots to the left.

The faint silhouette that was Jagger stepped back, trying to get a bead, one hand holding his ear where the gun had hit him. He shot me through the wrist. The second bullet ripped a groove in my neck. Then, incredibly, he stumbled over Sarge's feet again and fell backward. He brought the gun up again and put one through the roof. It was his last chance. I kicked the gun out of his hand, hearing the wet wood sound of breaking bones. I kicked him in the groin, doubling him up. I kicked him again, this time in the back of the head, and his feet rattled a fast, unconscious tattoo on the floor. He was dead then, but I kicked him again and again, kicked him until there was nothing but pulp and strawberry jam, nothing no one could ever identify, not by teeth, not by anything. I kicked him until I couldn't swing my leg anymore, and my toes wouldn't move.

I suddenly realized I was screaming and there was no one to hear me but dead men.

I wiped my mouth and knelt over Jagger's body.

My heap was just where I had left it, around the block from Keenan's house, but now it was just a ghostly hump of snow. I had left Sarge's VW about a mile back. I hoped my heater was still working. I was numb all over.

I got the door open and winced a little as I sat down inside. The crease in my neck had already clotted over, but my wrist hurt like hell.

The starter worked for a long time, and the motor finally cranked over. The heater was working, and the one wiper cleared away the snow on the driver's side. Jagger had been lying about his quarter, of course; it wasn't on him, nor was it in the unobtrusive Studebaker Lark he had come in. But I had his wallet. And his address. If I needed it—and somehow I didn't think I would. Sarge's quarter was the one with the X.

I pulled out carefully. I was going to be careful for a long time. The Sarge had been right about one thing. Barney had been a dumb slob. The fact that he had also been my friend didn't matter anymore. The debt had been paid.

I had a lot to be careful for. ■

COLLECTING KING

(continued from page 33)

night, the most collectible King paperback. Its only printing, in 1978, numbered less than 75,000 copies, of which probably 10% survive today. Its market price has ranged as high as \$50.

Which King volume is the rarest of the rare? Certainly the most difficult deluxe edition to acquire is the twenty-six copy Phantasia Press "ultra-limited" edition, bound in asbestos, of *Firestarter*, copies of which have sold in excess of \$2,000. In terms of trade books, the first edition of *Salem's Lot* should remain the rarity; but there is long-term potential in such items as *Rage*, as well as the *Creepshow* comic, scripted by King, illustrated by Berni Wrightson, and published in oversize paperback by New American Library's Plume Books.

A superior bet is the sole hard-bound appearance of *Creepshow*, by Editions des Savanes/Albin Michel ("A crêper de rire et de frayeur!")—which brings us to foreign editions, a scourge that even the most militant of American bookdealers has yet to inflict upon the pocketbooks of King collectors. Enough!

If you must pursue such rarities—or simply the occasional first edition—observe the following simple rules, which should save you frustration and more than a few dollars.

Set limits. A collector must know what it is that he or she is collecting, and how much he or she is willing, and, more important, able to pay.

Ignore investment potential. The *Wall Street Journal* notwithstanding, rare books have always been risky investments, not simply because of market volatility, but also because of the difficulty and expense of storing and insuring books, and the ease with which they succumb to damage and deterioration.

Avoid signed copies of trash editions. A signature typically hikes the price of a hardcover from \$50 to \$100, a ridiculous sum for a young, living author who is as approachable as Stephen King.

Beware the manufactured collectible. An inevitable result of collecting mania, these items, such as an unauthorized "limited edition" of *Pet Sematary*, consisting merely of rebound Doubleday books, should be avoided, not simply as a matter of

moral principle, but also because of dubious long-term value.

Know your bookseller. The rare book market is troubled by increasingly shoddy business practices. Try to work regularly with the same dealers.

Avoid purchasing anything but new books by mail. The cardinal rule of book-buying is to inspect the item prior to purchase, and to offer a price based upon that specific book. If you must purchase by mail, work with reputable booksellers. In the fantasy and horror field, the prominent mail-order bookmen are L.W. Currey (L.W. Currey, Inc., Elizabethtown, NY 12932) and Robert L. Weinberg (15415 Oxford Drive, Oak Park, IL 60452); although pricey, their integrity and reliability are unsurpassable.

Bargains. There are no bargains. It is thus your job, as a collector, to know your market as well as the bookseller; if not, he deserves your dollars.

When in doubt, don't buy. If there is any question in your mind about the quality of the book offered for sale, or the propriety of its price, or the reliability of the seller, or, most important, about your need for the book—*don't buy*.

One last word of advice: Before you buy, open the book. Look at the words instead of the condition of the cover, the story instead of the investment potential.

Last autumn, Steve King and I were riding in his van through the back roads of Maine when the subject of collecting came up. He talked of the time that he attended a science fiction convention in Knoxville, Tennessee, and had to sign so many books that he couldn't hold a spoon when he tried to eat that night. I told my story about the \$200 remainder copies of *The Shining*, and he recalled that the same bookseller had once approached him to sign a boxload of books "for my friends." Did he want inscriptions? No, thank you, just Steve King's signature.

That night, back at the house, Steve handed me a first edition of *The Shining*. "Stick this on your shelf," he said with a smile, "as a reminder."

Inside, it reads:

"Doug—

Here's a True Fact collectors don't seem to know—it's the same story even if you print it on shopping bags..." ■

And now, a Stephen King newspaper—Castle Rock.

A few weeks ago, while opening our mail, we came across a thick manilla-enveloped package with a return-address from Castle Rock in Bangor, Maine. We had a dreadful urge to toss it into our Bottomless Slush Pile—but a certain sense of duty compelled us to open the envelope, just as we always do.

We were certainly rewarded for the effort! Inside was a complete set of fan-publisher Stephanie Leonard's Stephen King newsletter, *Castle Rock*, a delightful little journal jam-packed with tidbits like the following:

"Boris, S.K.'s pet scorpion, died Feb. 5th. Boris has been in residence in a terrarium on S.K.'s desk for over a year, having been given to S.K. after a speaking engagement in the West. He is now encased in Lucite. No flowers, please...."

"S.K. owns a terrific rock radio station—in Bangor, WZON—what would you expect from a rock fan like him? So if you're in Bangor, making the pilgrimage past S.K.'s house on West Broadway (wish we had the flashbulb concession there!) like any true fan, tune your radio to 62 on the AM dial. WZON recently went all stereo and sounds better than ever. He occasionally does editorials for the "Z," and with his permission perhaps we can bring you a few. You'll probably see a side of S.K. you wouldn't normally see... the political S.K.... the silly S.K...."

In her spare time, Leonard doubles as King's secretary. Her publication shows an insight into the writer's life that isn't to be found elsewhere—and not just insight, but access: Leonard serialized a King novelette, "Dolan's Cadillac," in several of her early issues. (For completists, the subscription ad in *Castle Rock* boasts back issues: copies of the novelette may still be available. Write to Leonard at the address below.)

Stephen King devotees interested in receiving *Castle Rock* can subscribe by sending \$12.00 (\$15.00 after Jan. 1; \$20.00 overseas) to: *Castle Rock*, P.O. Box 8183, Bangor, ME, 04401.

—AR

THE LAST ONE MO ONCE GOLDEN OLDIES REVIVAL

(continued from page 39)

Lenny Winter night all over the dial! One more chance. Steadying his hand, he guided the indicator to the all-news station. The only tunes you ever heard there were commercial jingles. He found the number—

—and reeled away from the machine as the familiar opening riffs of "Mary-Liz" rammed against him.

With a quaking index finger stretched out before him, he forced himself forward and hit the power button.

Silence. Blessed silence.

He realized he was trembling. Why? It was all just a coincidence, nothing more. The Flipper's death had put the stations into a retrospective mood. They were playing old Goodloe tunes and other stuff from his era. And the all-news station ... it was probably doing a feature on Goodloe and Lenny had tuned in just as they were airing a sample of his work.

Sure. That was it. So why not turn the radio back on?

Why not indeed?

Because he had to go out now. Yes. For some air.

Lenny fled the trophy room and went to the front hall. It was January and he'd need a coat. He pulled the closet door open and stopped.

At first glance he thought the closet was empty. Then he saw all the coats and jackets on the floor. They'd all fallen off their hangers.

And those hangers ... they didn't look like hangers anymore.

They hung on the closet pole in a neat row, but they had been twisted into an odd shape that was becoming too familiar ... something like a cross between a G clef and a dollar sign. They hung there, swaying gently, the light from the hall gleaming dully along their contorted lengths of wire. Lenny stared at them dumbly, feeling terror expand with the memory of where he had first seen that shape.

Goodloe's apartment.

Flip had been squatting under a hanger shaped just like these when Lenny had last seen him. He'd called it the great god Doolang or some such nonsense. Just a junkie fever dream—but what had happened to these?

Someone was in the house! That was the only explanation. Some buddy of Flip's had come here to twist these things up into knots and scare

him. Well, it was working. Lenny was terrified. Not of any supernatural mumbo-jumbo, but of the very idea of one of Flip's junkie friends in his house. Probably upstairs right now, waiting. He had to get out!

Lenny snatched a coat from the floor and stumbled toward the front door. He'd be safer outside. He could run around to the garage and take the car. Then he'd phone the police and have them go through the house. That was the best way, the safest way.

As the door slammed behind him, he tensed for a cold blast of January air. It never came. Instead, it was warm out here. The air was stale, heavy with the smell and humidity of packed bodies. And it was dark ... darker than it should be.

Pain shot through Lenny's abdomen as his intestines twisted in fear. This wasn't his front yard! This was someplace else! He turned back to his

Flip hurled his wild riffs into the smokey air, oblivious to the flames that ringed him.

front door. It was gone, replaced by a pair of wide, flat, swinging panels, each with a small glass rectangle at eye level. Through the glass he could see what appeared to be a lighted theater lobby with Art Deco designs on the walls, popcorn machine and all. But deserted. He pounded on the doors, but it was like pounding against the base of a skyscraper; they didn't even rattle.

He turned. A light was growing out where the apron of his driveway should have been. Something was moving in the glow. As his eyes adjusted, he could see rows of theater seats stretching away on either side, and a filthy carpet leading down to a stage where the light continued to grow.

Noise filtered in like someone turning up the volume of a record player. Music: the driving rhythm of "Mary-Liz" and Flip Goodloe himself

shouting the lyrics.

With his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth, Lenny took a faltering step or two toward the stage. It couldn't be!

But it was. No mistaking those gyrations, or the voice, or the riffs: the Flipper.

He heard crowd noises—cheers, hoots, shouts, hands clapping—and tore his gaze from the stage. The seats around him were filled with kids jumping up and down and gyrating wildly as they listened to the music. But there was no excitement in their slack faces, nor in their cold eyes. Lenny knew this place. And he recognized those kids.

It was the Bixby in Astoria! But that was impossible—the Bixby was gone—burned out back in '59 during his first rock show and torn down a few months later!

Lenny ran back to the swinging doors and slammed against them. They still wouldn't budge. He pounded on the glass but there was no one in the outer lobby to hear. There had to be another way out, another exit. He was halfway down the aisle when he smelled it.

Smoke.

A cough. Another. Then someone shouted "Fire!" and the panic began. The crowd leaped out of its seats and surged into the aisle, enveloping Lenny like a hungry amoeba. As he went down under the press of panicked bodies, he caught a glimpse of the stage. Flip Goodloe was still up there, hurling his wild riffs into the smoky air, oblivious to the flames that ringed him. Flip smiled fiercely his way, and then Lenny was down, his back slamming against the filthy carpet.

Pain. Shoes kicked at him, heels high and low dug into his face and abdomen in frantic effort to get by. Bodies fell on him. The weight atop him grew until he heard his ribs crack and shatter; but the lancing pain from the bone splinters was overwhelmed by his hunger for air. He couldn't breathe! Stale air clogged his lungs. The odor of old popcorn and dried chewing gum from the carpet was becalmed in his nasal passages.

Vision dimmed, tunneling down to a narrow circle of hazy light filtering through the chaos that swirled around him. And there on the ceiling of the theater he saw a chandelier. But this was not the punchbowl affair that had hung in the old Bixby. This was a huge fluorescent tube, glowing redly, twisted into that same shape ... the Doolang shape ...

Sequels, triquels, and romancing the bomb.

Psycho III

Stage 12. Universal Pictures. Sitting at a table in a carefully reconstructed country kitchen, Anthony Perkins grooms a small, stuffed black bird, his gestures pure Norman Bates. Clearly, Norman feels at home, which should come as no surprise. This time around, he has a director who understands his every tick, twitch, and tremor: Perkins himself.

Of his dual role Perkins says, "It's fun. I'm too busy to be nervous. I just treat it as one job. The directing gives me fuel to perform. And the performance influences the directing."

He notes that a sequel is the "toughest kind of movie making ... because it must be better than the original. Audiences have their opinions, judgments, and personal reviews based on the original picture. People want to be scared all over again. But it is done with a good humoredness, which I think is part of the picture."

Speaking with fond irony of Bates, Perkins says, "He has been doing the Hamlet of horror roles. He's a mixed-up guy who wants to stay home," he pauses slyly, "and behave himself."

Psycho III screen writer Charles Edward Pogue sent Perkins the script, hoping the actor would agree to another reprise of his famous role. Perkins liked it so much he decided to direct as well. "It's a beautifully written script, and it's tight. The strength of it and its eloquence gave me the courage to take on this daunting assignment."

Producer Hilton Green's *Psycho* pedigree rivals Perkins'. Green worked as an assistant director with Hitchcock on the original film, and subsequently produced the first sequel.

There's a Hitchcock connection on the design side as well. Henry Bumstead, who won Oscars for his design work on *The Sting* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, worked on *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Vertigo*, and *Topaz*.

Look for *Psycho III* in the spring.

—Richard Partlow



Norman in a nervous state.

The Manhattan Project

The grip hands me the atom bomb. It is rather nice looking for a nuclear weapon, sheathed in clear plastic, on its nose an attractive set of buttons and a digital clock—the better to watch the countdown to destruction.

"This is the first bomb I've designed in some time," Bran Ferren, *Manhattan Project's* sfx man, laughs. "Most people are under the impression that it's easy to build an atomic bomb. It's really not that easy. They really are subtle devices."

This is certainly reassuring.

"But a very sharp kid could do it," Ferren goes on cheerfully, giving credence to *Manhattan Project's* premise. I give the grip her bomb back. "And so the film is designing something like that so it's interesting on the screen. The artist takes over at that point."

In *The Manhattan Project*, Paul Stephens (Christopher Collet) creates a most unusual science project for the National Science Fair. When the government discovers that he has stolen some plutonium and succeeded in building a nuclear device, Paul and his girlfriend Jenny (Cynthia Nixon) flee.

Director Marshall Brickman (Simon) describes the film as "a ripping good yarn," but when pressed admits to a serious interest in the original *Manhattan Project*. After reading a number of memoirs by the

bomb's progenitors, he says, "I thought, what about an analogue to what happens to somebody who starts out simply with the challenge, 'What if I can do that?' like the kid in the movie."

"What I wanted to do was find some character through whom I could explore the journey, the challenge, the elation of solving the technical problems, and then the consequences on the people around him."

A seventeen-year-old hero is ideal for his purposes, Brickman explains, because he may have the intellectual equipment but none of the "moral or ethical constraints" that a "true adult would have."

Production designer Philip Rosenberg and Ferren have done a handsome job in creating the interior of a nuclear pilot production plant, integrating stainless steel and special glass fittings acquired "at garage sales" at Lawrence Livermore Laboratories, Brookhaven, and other nuclear installations—about twenty percent of the structure—into constructions of their own design.

"What both Marshall and I were trying for on the set is something that is visually credible in terms of the physics such that the impression the audience should be left with is that one visited a location."

Ferren has also cooked up some exotic lasers, which Brickman notes have never been done before.

Also starring is the acclaimed actor John Lithgow (*Terms of Endearment*, 2010, *All That Jazz*).

The Manhattan Project is due out in June from Twentieth Century-Fox.

—MB

Fantasy Flashes

David Kronenberg (*Scanners*, *The Dead Zone*) is currently working on a remake of the classic story of mixed-up molecules, *The Fly* ... Former *Twilight Zone* producer Buck Houghton is completing a noir/police drama involving astral projection on *The Blue Man*. From Filmline International, *The Blue Man* is due this spring ... James Cameron (*The Terminator*) will direct Sigourney Weaver in *Aliens*, the sequel to, you got it, *Alien*. Twentieth Century Fox will release it in the summer of '86. ■

COMING UP IN APRIL

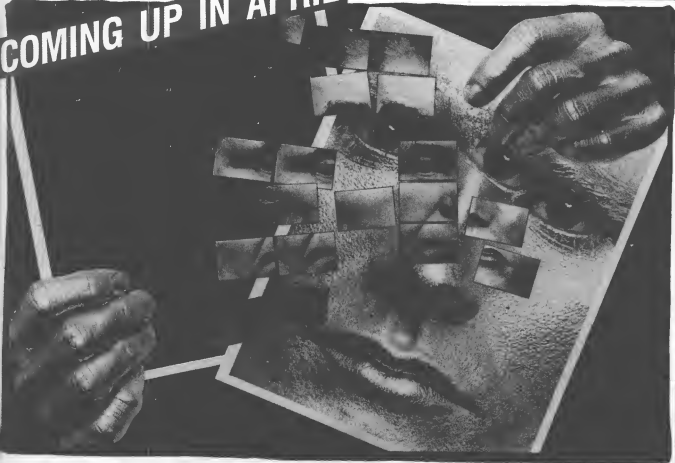


ILLUSTRATION BY TETSU OKUHARA

STRANGE THINGS CAN HAPPEN...

Weird things can happen...

In Charles Grant's "The Price of a Toy"

Skin-crawling things can happen...

In Jon Cohen's "Ruth's Pool"

Wild things can happen...

In Roald Dahl's "Way Out"

BUT THEY CAN ONLY HAPPEN IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE!

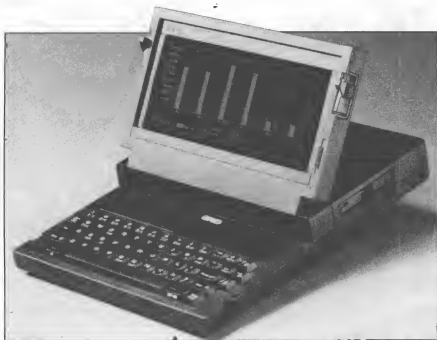
ALSO: In our Fifth Annual Twilight Zone Short Story Contest
READERS BECOME WRITERS!
LOOK FOR THE WINNERS AND THEIR STORIES

IN THE APRIL ISSUE OF

TWILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE

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Laptops Part II: Squint before you leap.



Gridcase III

When I started my quest for the perfect LCD screen, I didn't know I was entering a hall of mirrors. (For the uninitiated, LCD stands for "Liquid Crystal Display," generally standard on the new wave of ultra-light portable computers called laptops.)

This infatuation was born on the day I saw an editor in a coffee shop on East 38th Street in Manhattan working on some copy with a writer. Sitting on the formica table, among the fries and half-eaten burgers, was a Hewlett-Packard (HP-1110) laptop computer. No pencils. No paper. Just editor, writer, and ultra-portable machine. For a full-time editor, this was a scene of high romance.

I dreamed of writing and editing at blinding speed in coffee shops, trains, elevators, and bank lines with my 9-pound, battery-powered fantasy machine.

Unfortunately, I couldn't see the words on the H-P screen. I attributed this to the fact that the light was striking its silver surface at a harsh angle and that, despite the fact that I saw nothing but reflections, the editor and her charge were actually gazing at letters, phrases, and paragraphs flitting across the LCD.

On my way to work the next day, I dropped in at my local Data General dealer, who had carefully

hidden his Data General One in a corner. The salesman tilted the screen and fiddled with the resolution, but to my amazement the words were still mere wisps of gray dots.

As Stuart Norwood, editor of *Pico* magazine, an excellent reference for laptop and briefcase users, put it, the Data General One screen "is good as a mirror for shaving."

Certain that this machine was an aberration, I trotted over to Radio Shack and tried the Tandy TRS-80 Model 200. This screen was quite readable, and for a simple reason. The letters were double the size of the others I had seen. But there was a catch. The display was only 40 characters across, and I had read somewhere that this limitation would turn my paragraphs into the prose equivalents of Giacometti sculptures.

Meanwhile, my faith never wavered. As a Kaypro owner, I hungered for the Kaypro 2000. Unfortunately, while not as difficult to decipher as the NEC PC841A display, this screen was also a disappointment.

The Morrow Pivot II proved, with its back-lit screen, to be an improvement, but the only model I was able to get my hands on—at Macy's—would only offer its list of functions.

Buzzing, it refused to process a single character. (A number of manufacturers seem to have given up marketing laptops.)

I was beginning to conclude that laptops were a cruel hoax. They could ingest vast amounts of information in their diminutive statures, but they refused to tell you what they had eaten. Your finest creations would remain invisible if you depended on the LCD screen.

My faith was restored, however, by gas plasma. (Such are the epiphanies of modern life.)

The Gridcase 3 is an 11 pound, IBM compatible, 16-bit microprocessor, with an 80-bit co-processor option. It can be had in RAMs of 128K, 256K, and 512K. Its built-in 3.5 inch floppy disc drive can store 720K. Best of all, you can actually see what you have put into the Gridcase because of the wonders of the gas plasma screen. Unlike the dull LCD, GPDs are luminescent. And like the LCDs, they do not emit radiation, one of the controversial aspects of the standard CRT. (The major drawback of the GPD is its appetite for energy—quite fierce.)

Of course, Gridcase III is not the easiest machine to come by. In fact, it's downright mysterious. I am told Grid Systems (2535 Garcia Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043) does a lot of business with the government, which may account for their lack of interest in the mere consumer (Grid III isn't screwdriver priced!) For information, you may reach their office at 1 Penn Plaza, New York, N.Y., at (212) 563-1650. Gridcase sells for just under \$4000.

Ultimately, my odyssey brought me back to the cheapest machine of all, the Tandy 100. Having sneered first at its forty-character display, I now find that of all LCDs available, this one is the most readable. (And available.) The best thing about the 100 is its price, \$599.00. The second best thing is its weight, less than four pounds, making it truly portable. And unless you're Balzac, its modest 24K should hold you until you get home and transfer your information into your desktop. If you want to take a step up to a 40X16 display (the 100 is 40X16), check out the Model 200, at \$999.00.

—MB